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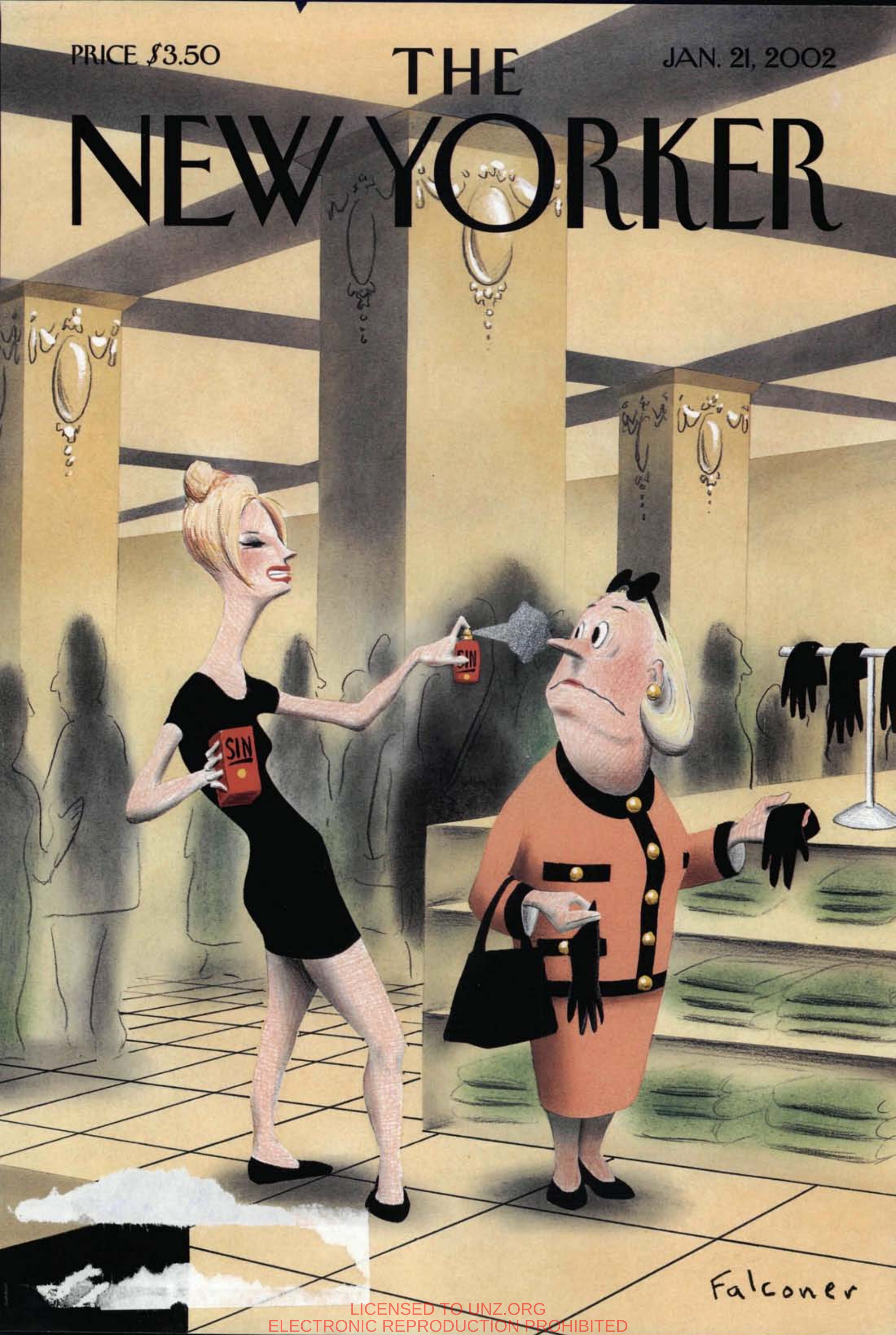
# THE NEW YORKER

JAN. 21, 2002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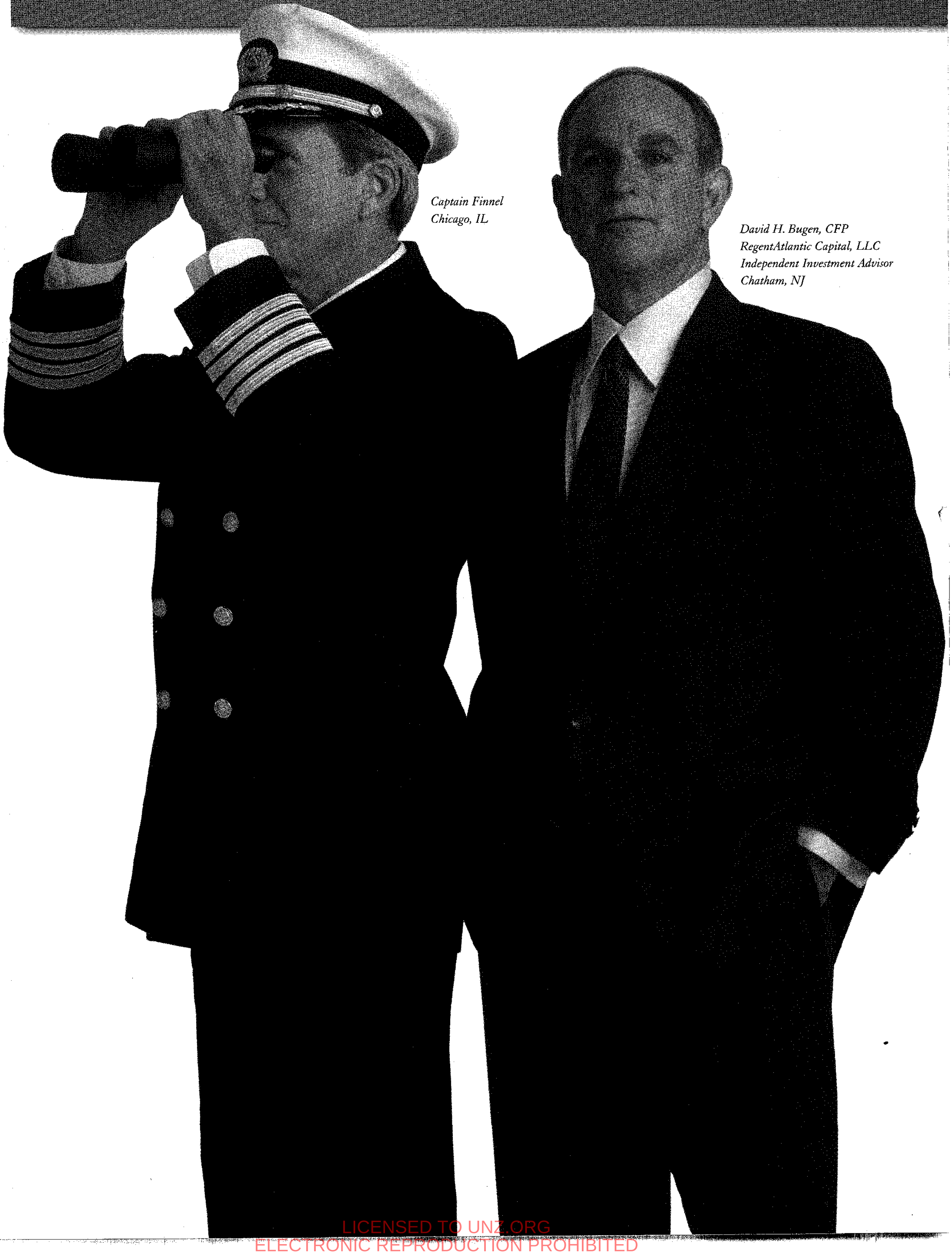

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# THE NEW YORKER

JANUARY 21, 2002

6 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
23 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
*Demonizing Daschle; euro hoopla.*

*Christopher de Bellaigue* 28 LETTER FROM HERAT
The Lost City
*Unearthing the past in Afghanistan.*

*Jeffrey Toobin* 34 ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS
Battle for the Barnes
*Race, money, and a houseful of masterpieces.*

*Lawrence Wright* 40 A REPORTER AT LARGE
Lives of the Saints
*The Mormons are ready for the Olympics, but they face a struggle over their legacy.*

*John Lahr* 58 PROFILES
The Player Queen
*The reign of Judi Dench.*

*T. Coraghessan Boyle* 70 FICTION
"Swept Away"

THE CRITICS

*Anthony Lane* 76 ON PHOTOGRAPHY
*Irving Penn's nudes at the Met.*
83 BOOKS
Briefly Noted
*John Lahr* 84 THE THEATRE
*"The Play What I Wrote."*

POEMS

*Philip Schultz* 32 "Free Mercy"
*Abba Kovner* 64 "Detached Verses"
*Henri Cole* 74 "Pillowcase with Praying Mantis"

COVER *"A Whiff of Sin," by Ian Falconer* THE BACK PAGE *"Hockey Dads," by Barry Blitt* DRAWINGS *Sam Gross, Michael Maslin, C. Covert Darbyshire, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Peter Steiner, Danny Shanahan, David Sipress, Tom Cheney, Harry Bliss, Robert Mankoff, Matthew Diffee, Alex Gregory, Donald Reilly, Roz Chast, Barbara Smaller, Frank Cotham, Gahan Wilson, Arnie Levin*

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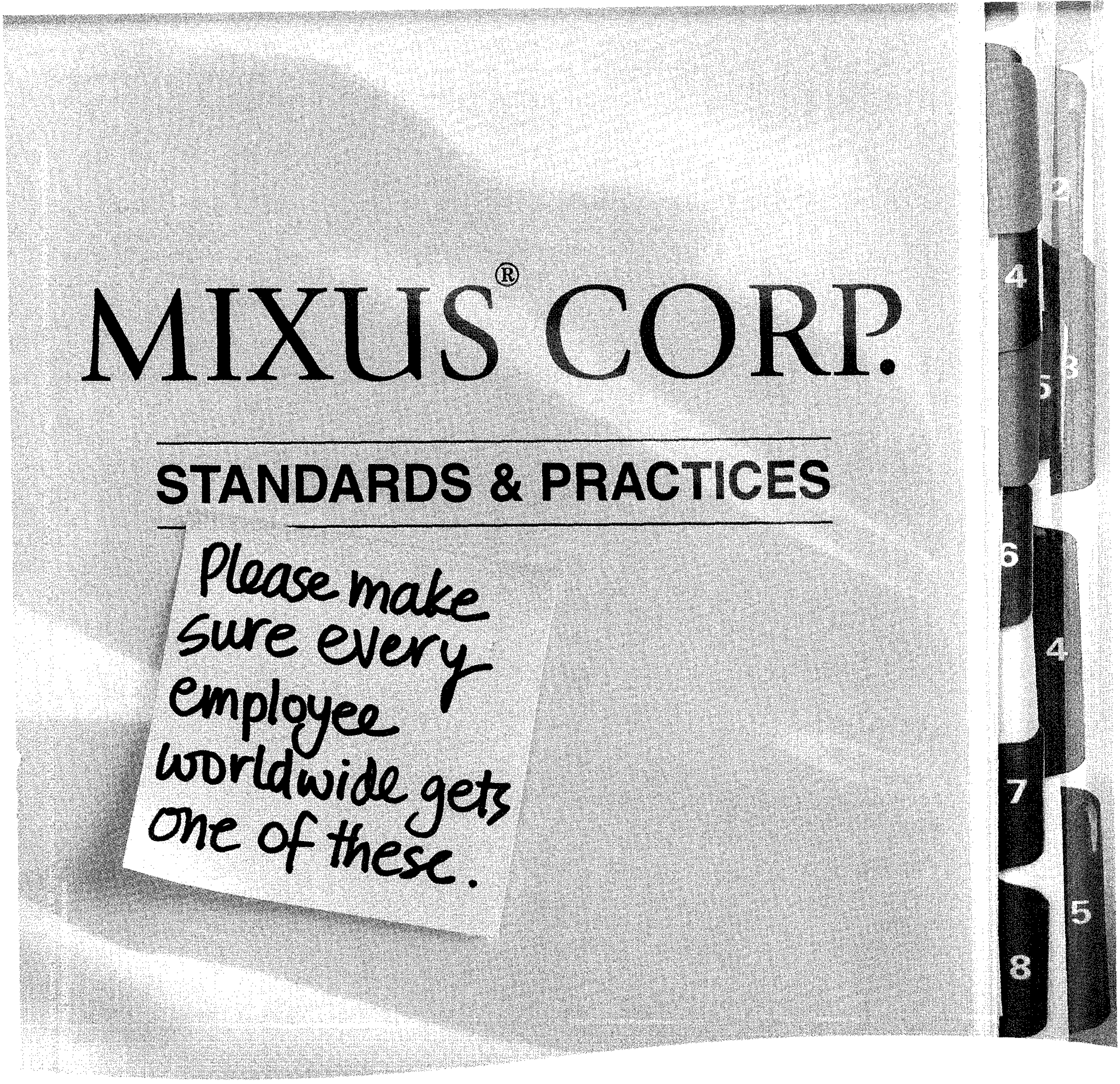
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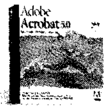
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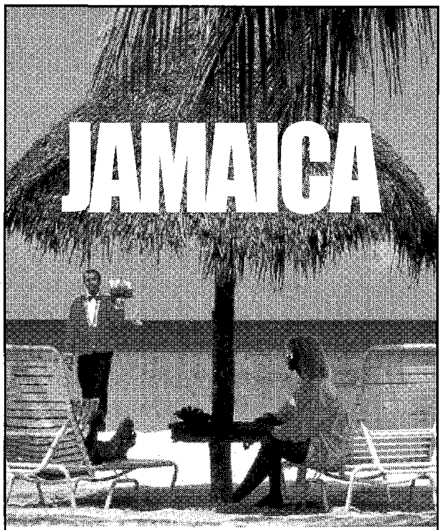

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# CONTRIBUTORS

Lawrence Wright ("Lives of the Saints," p. 40) is the author of "Saints and Sinners," "Remembering Satan," and numerous other books.

Christopher de Bellaigue ("The Lost City," p. 28) is the *Economist's* correspondent in Iran. He is currently writing a book about Iran since the Islamic revolution.

Jeffrey Toobin ("Battle for the Barnes," p. 34) is the author of "Too Close to Call: The Thirty-Six-Day Battle to Decide the 2000 Election."

Ian Falconer (Cover) is an artist and stage designer. He has published two children's books, "Olivia" and "Olivia Saves the Circus."

Jane Kramer (The Talk of the Town, p. 24) writes the Letter from Europe.

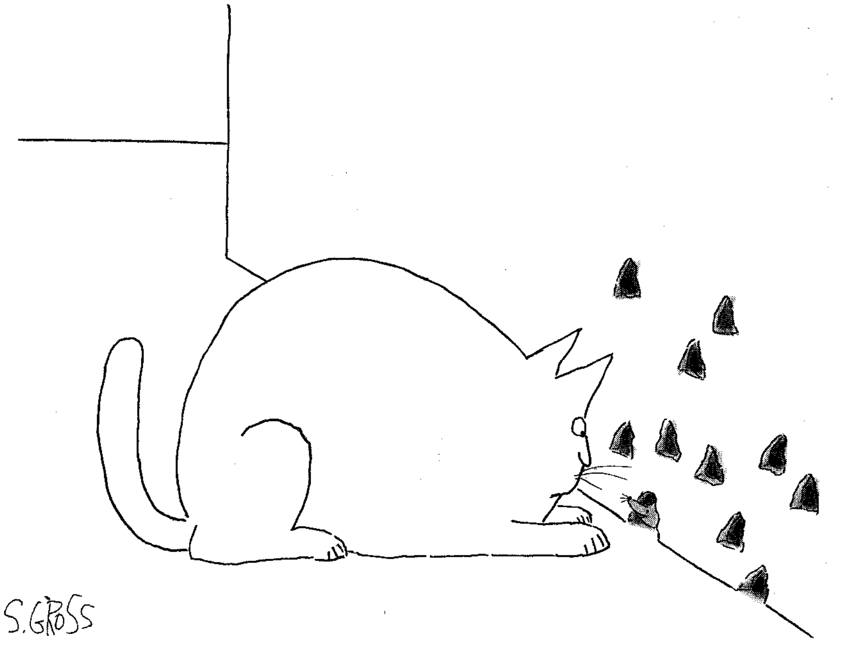
John Lahr ("The Player Queen," p. 58; The Theatre, p. 84), the magazine's senior drama critic, co-created, with Elaine Stritch, "Elaine Stritch at Liberty," which opens on Broadway next month.

Pat Oliphant (Sketchbook, p. 63) is an artist and political cartoonist who works in Washington, D.C., and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Hendrik Hertzberg (Comment, p. 23) has been writing for the magazine since 1969.

Abba Kovner (Poem, p. 64) was a writer of poetry and prose for more than thirty years. He died in 1987.

T. Coraghessan Boyle (Fiction, p. 70) is the author of, most recently, "After the Plague," a collection of short stories. ♦



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# THE MAIL

## ISRAEL'S TARGETS

I am the Arab American Action Network representative whose condemnation of the targeting and killing of civilians, whether Palestinians or Israelis, Hendrik Hertzberg calls "dishonest" (The Talk of the Town, December 17th). He argues that there is a moral difference: Israel kills Palestinian civilians only "carelessly," and does not target them, while Palestinians deliberately kill Israelis. If we're dishonest, then so are human-rights groups that have examined Israel's practices. Amnesty International has condemned what it called Israel's "utter disregard for human life in the Occupied Territories." Physicians for Human Rights concluded that "the pattern of injuries seen in many victims did not reflect IDF"—Israel Defense Forces—"use of firearms in life-threatening situations but rather indicated targeting solely for the purpose of wounding or killing." Is it honest to propagate the illusion, as Hertzberg does, that Israel's massive use of deadly force, designed to maintain an occupation, is simply a program of self-defense?
*Ali Abunimah*
*Chicago, Ill.*

Hertzberg is right to challenge the routine equation of Israeli and Palestinian violence. Israel has a military with well-trained soldiers, whom it uses to defend its citizens. When it errs, or acts disproportionately, reasonable people can criticize it: there is a command structure, and channels to seek redress. What is not open to debate, as Hertzberg makes clear, is whether this army is at all comparable to suicide bombers who murder civilians. Their lack of anything like Israel's military does not make them underdogs, whose actions are somehow more acceptable.
*Adam Gregerman*
*New York City*

## THE S.A.T. ARISTOCRACY

As Malcolm Gladwell writes, Stanley H. Kaplan has indeed proved that the S.A.T. favors those who have studied, practiced, and been coached, opening doors for the "grinds" and strivers, whom the test was meant to shut out in favor of "naturals" (A Critic at Large, December 17th). But the need for preparation in order to be competitive on the S.A.T. has created a new aristocracy of middle-class and upper-middle-class kids, whose parents can afford these courses. Kaplan's company charges close to nine hundred dollars for its standard course, more than the average inner-city student's family can afford; his revolution has done little more than replace one form of advantage with another.
*Jeff A. Lynn*
*Charlottesville, Va.*

Gladwell has it right: Stanley Kaplan truly is a subversive. He has shown that privately run, relatively inexpensive educational systems can achieve more in actual, measurable results than large, government-run bureaucracies can. Kaplan's success makes a strong case for school vouchers. We should let every family benefit from the educational option that is best for its children, whether it is a public school, a private school, or a learning center. All that parents who pay for Kaplan's courses seek is education, however they can get it.
*David Seidenwurm*
*Sacramento, Calif.*

The conflict between talent and learned behavior, which Gladwell explores through the career of Stanley Kaplan, was put to rest by the great A. J. Liebling in your magazine long ago. After observing the young Cassius Clay, Liebling wrote, "Honest effort and sterling character backed by solid instruction will carry a man a good way, but unearned natural ability has a lot to be said for it."
*Frank Hannigan*
*Califon, N.J.*

•

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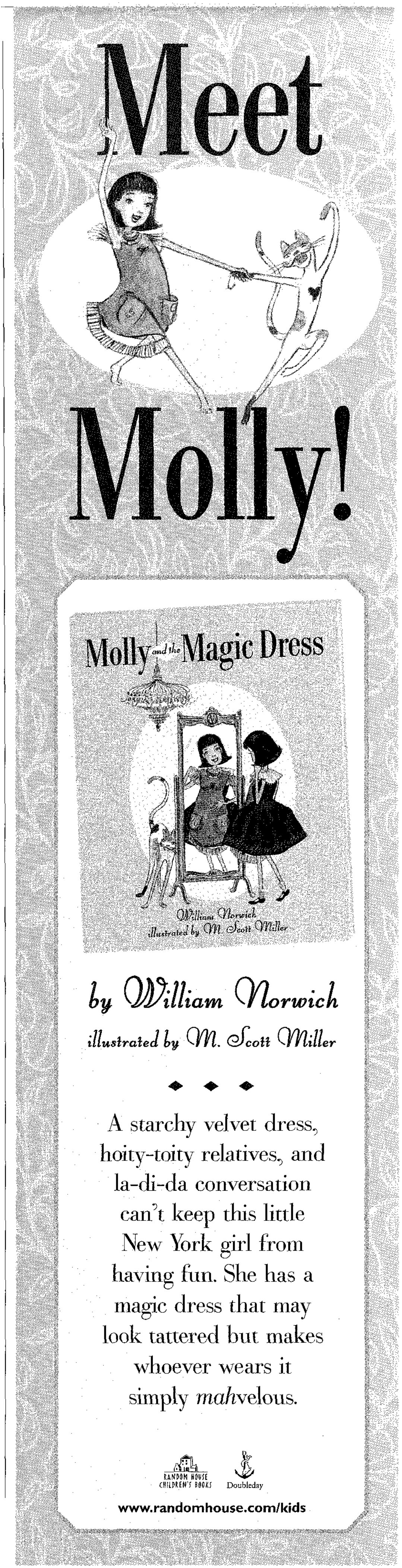

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William Norwich
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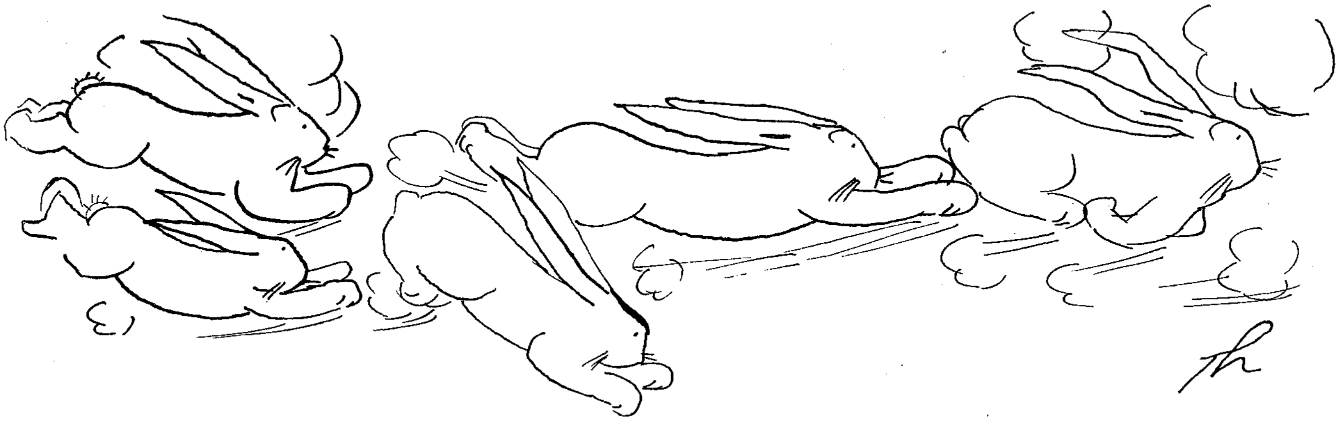

## THE THEATRE
## OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

*Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.*

**CARSON MC CULLERS (HISTORICALLY INACCURATE)**
The Georgia-born writer's life and work is the subject of a new play by Sarah Schulman, directed by Marion McClinton. In previews through Jan. 19. Opens Jan. 20 at 7. (Women's Project Theatre, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

**CYMBELINE**
Theatre for a New Audience's staging of Shakespeare's play, directed by Bartlett Sher. In previews through Jan. 19. Opens Jan. 20 at 6. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

**FURTHER FROM THE FURTHEST THING**
After a volcano erupts, an isolated island community is evacuated to an industrial town, in a drama by the Scottish playwright Zinnie Harris. The cast includes Jenny Dundas, Dan Futterman, Peter Gerety, Robert Hogan, and Jennifer Sterlin. Neil Pepe is the director. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

**MONSTER**
Michael Greif ("Rent") is the director of a new play by Neal Bell, based on Mary Shelley's novel "Frankenstein." In previews. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

**PERMANENT VISITOR**
A two-month festival of plays by Dawn Powell ("Jig-Saw," "An Artist's Life and Other Cautionary Tales About the Theatre," "As We Were Saying (Or Were We?)," "Women at Four O'Clock," and "Straight Up . . . and with a Twist"), staged by the 78th Street Theatre Lab. Opens Jan. 18 at 8. (236 W. 78th St. 206-1515.)

**SORROWS & REJOICINGS**
Judith Light, Charlayne Woodard, John Glover, and Marcy Harriell star in a new play by Athol Fugard, set in post-apartheid South Africa, in which two women (one white, one black) meet at the funeral of a man they both loved. In previews. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

**SPEED-HEDDA**
The Los Angeles troupe Fabulous Monsters Performance Company brings its all-male adaptation of "Hedda Gabler" to town for a brief engagement. Opens Jan. 17 at 8 and continues, Thursdays through Sundays, through Feb. 3. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

**TAPE**
From Naked Angels, Stephen Belber's play about three high-school friends who reunite in an East Lansing motel room. Geoffrey Nauffts is the director. Preview on Jan. 16. Opens Jan. 17 at 8 (José Quintero, 534 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

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## OPENED RECENTLY

**BRUTAL IMAGINATION**
The playwright Cornelius Eady and the composer Diedre Murray's latest collaboration concerns the notorious case of Susan Smith, who in order to cover her own crime of murder claimed an unknown black man had abducted her children. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-0303.)

**THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED)**
Three actors perform thirty-seven plays and a hundred and fifty-four sonnets in under two hours. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

**ECCO PORCO**
A persecuted pig is the focus of the latest show from the interdisciplinary troupe Mabou Mines, written by Lee Breuer and starring Ruth Maleczech and Frederick Neumann. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Closes Jan. 27.)

**HOBSON'S CHOICE**
An Atlantic Theatre Company revival of Harold Brighouse's 1915 play, starring David Aaron Baker, Brian Murray, and Martha Plimpton. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

**HOMEBODY/KABUL**
Tony Kushner's latest play, set in London and in Kabul in 1998, about a woman who becomes obsessed with Afghanistan. Declan Donnellan is the director. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 239-6200.)

**MAMMA MIA!**
This smorgasbord of song, the brainchild of Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus, the male half of the seventies supergroup ABBA, is nothing but hokum—a chucklehead pleasure. Andersson and Ulvaeus have shrewdly allowed their platinum hits to be sent up by a story that pits the impudence of youth against the resilience of middle age. Catherine Johnson's book, which is simply a slick cartoon that connects the dots between ABBA's No. 1 singles, asks the question: Can twenty-year-old Sophie, the daughter of a hippie dropout who was the leader of a girl group called Donna and the Dynamos, find out which of the three men she's invited to her wedding is her real father? Though the show is cunningly directed by Phyllida Lloyd and given the proper vulgar acrylic touch by the designer Mark Thompson, the question—a multimillion-dollar McGuffin—remains unanswered. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/5/01.) (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 563-5544.)

**MARIA DEL BOSCO (SEX & RACING CARS: A SOUND OPERA)**
The avant-garde playwright Richard Foreman's fiftieth play. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

**MOSTLY SONDHEIM**
In her one-woman show, Barbara Cook performs the songs of Stephen Sondheim, as well as songs by his favorite composers. Sundays and Mondays at 7:30, through Feb. 11. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

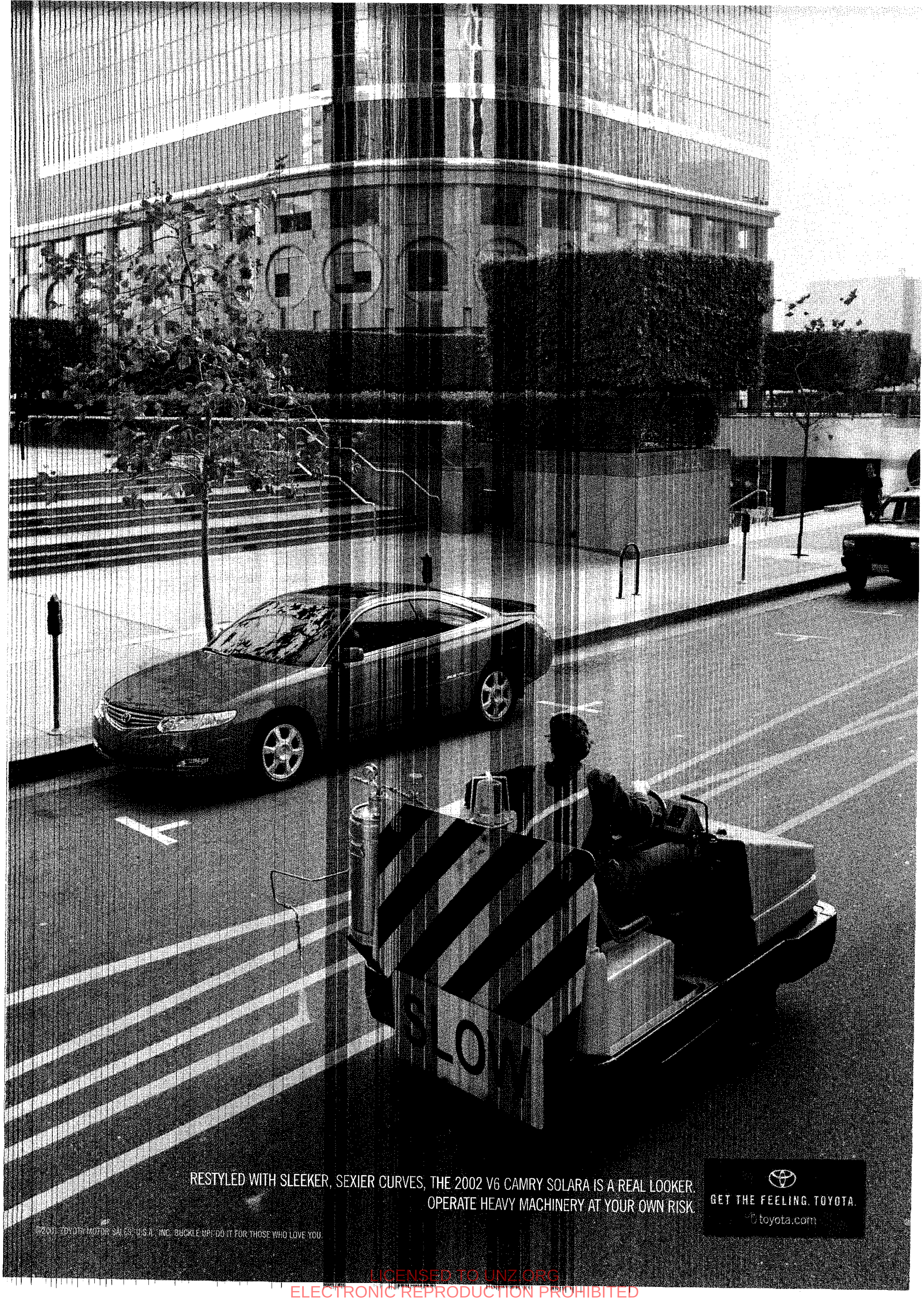
**NOISES OFF**
Jeremy Sams's revival of Michael Frayn's 1982 backstage comedy, a farce within an antic farce, is blissful fun. As the dysfunctional troupe of the travelling show "Nothing On," all the members of the excellent cast—Patti LuPone, Peter Gallagher, Richard Easton, Faith Prince, Edward Hibbert, Katie Finneran, T. R. Knight, Thomas McCarthy, and Robin Weigert—shine in roles that lesser comedians would surely find daunting. Frayn's construction requires spot-on comic timing, and with the help of Sams, this production delivers it—and then some. The laughs rumble through the audience from start to finish. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

**PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS**
It's one thing for a man to develop the ability to stretch his scrotum until it's the size of a dinner plate, but another to share this talent with the world. These two Australians, Simon Morley and David (Friendy) Friend, profess embarrassment at the success of their "little pub show," but it's still a con: fifteen minutes into their act they are utterly naked and out of ideas. They can't go on, but they do. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

**SEXAHOLIX . . . A LOVE STORY**
"A little coitus / Never hoit us," John Leguizamo jokes in his third one-man Broadway show, a crowd-pleasing hip-hop account of sexual escapades. Starting with the wacky impoverishment of his Colombian-Puerto Rican childhood and ending with proud parenthood as the father of two "Jew-ricans," Leguizamo is noisy, funny, inventive, and sweet. He brings new sounds, new moves, and a new audience to the Great White Way. (He even dances in the aisles.) Next time, though, he'd do well to bring new material, too. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

**THE SHAPE OF THINGS**
Gretchen Mol, Paul Rudd, Rachel Weisz, and Frederick Weller are in the cast of the Almeida Thea-

JAMES THURBER, 8/26/39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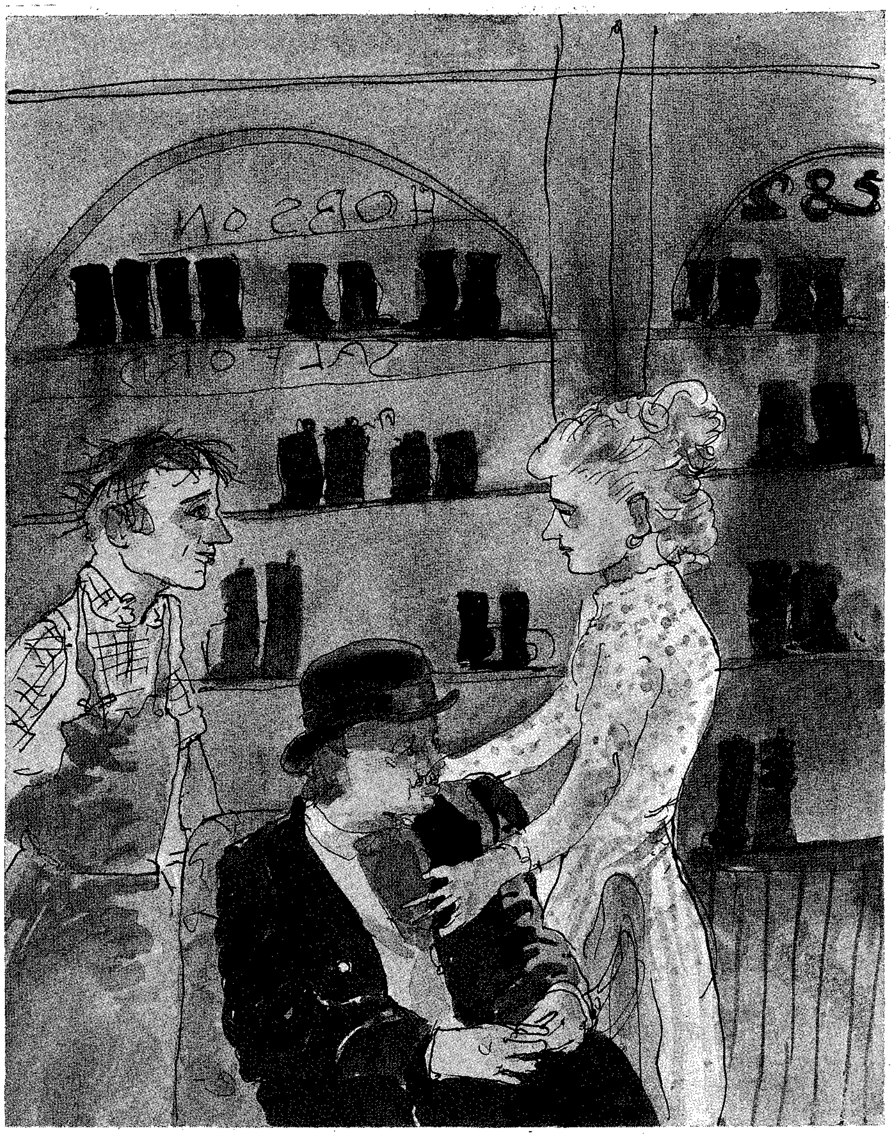

*David Aaron Baker, Brian Murray, and Martha Plimpton, in "Hobson's Choice."*

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

tre Company staging of Neil LaBute's latest play. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 20.)

**[SIC]**
Three struggling downtown twentysomethings live on the same floor in cubicles trying to pass as apartments, where they sidle around each other emotionally as well as physically. The thirty-six-year-old playwright Melissa James Gibson gives them a steady, if disjointed, torrent of clever things to say, with a lot of self-consciously odd rhythmic pauses built in. But Pinter it's not. When the characters stop their noisy self-absorption long enough to eavesdrop on the troubled couple in the large apartment below (an intriguing bit of stage design by Louisa Thompson), it turns out there's a better play going on down there. Directed by Daniel Aukin, the acting is good, especially by James Urbaniak, whose wry projection wrings the most out of his lines. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 206-1515. Closes Jan. 18.)

**SPEAKING IN TONGUES**
In the terrifically engaging opening scene of Andrew Bovell's play, in which four characters are talking almost simultaneously, no one is possessed and no one is blathering. They are all, however, on the verge of cheating on their spouses. Mark Clements has directed Bovell's fuguelike script with wit and command, so everyone, the audience included, gets the sincere, if desperate, attempt to communicate. After the flashy opening, the playwright's motifs of loneliness, betrayal, and need complicate, interweave, and deepen. Characters only speculated about in Act I become flesh in Act II, others are introduced, one reappears. The players—Karen Allen, Kevin Anderson, Margaret Colin, and Michel R. Gill—have the chops to pull off all nine parts impressively, so every scene delivers an unexpected wrinkle, an unfolding surprise. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100. Closes Jan. 20.)

**THE STREETS OF NEW YORK**
Charlotte Moore's musical adaptation of the nineteenth-century Irish playwright Dion Boucicault's drama. (Irish Rep, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Jan. 20.)

**SUMMER OF '42**
A musical adaptation of the 1971 movie, which was based on Herman Raucher's coming-of-age novel of the same title. With a book by Hunter Foster and music and lyrics by David Kirshenbaum. Gabriel Barre is the director and choreographer. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

**TARTUFFE**
The Worth Street Theatre presents a new version of Molière's comedy, written and directed by Jeff Cohen. The cast includes Gerald Anthony, Crista Moore, and the playwright Keith Reddin. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Duane St. 206-1515.)

**UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL**
This one-man show, written by Glen Berger and performed by T. Ryder Smith, manages to be both a funny tale of a Dutch librarian's midlife crisis and a serious, intriguing look at the value of any one life. After a book is returned to the library a hundred and thirteen years overdue, the librarian becomes obsessed with finding out how and why. He eventually comes to believe that the Wandering Jew was the errant borrower, whose late return of the volume is one of a series of clues he's left in a desperate attempt to document his existence. As billed, it's "An Impressive Presentation of Lovely Evidences." Directed by Randy White. (Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.)

**URINETOWN**
The amount of fun to be had at this musical, by Greg Kotis (book and lyrics) and Mark Hollmann (music and lyrics), is in direct proportion to the unpleasantness of its title. Its central idea is that an evil corporation controls all the toilets in a city that bears some resemblance to New York, but the show is really no more and no less than a terrifically spirited sendup of musicals and their conventions, as self-conscious and gag-happy as a Warner Bros. cartoon (not only does a sign saying "Secret Hideout" hang above a secret hideout; the sign has an arrow on it). (10/1/01) (Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

**THE VOICE OF THE TURTLE**
The Mint Theatre carries on its mission to present worthy but neglected old plays, this time a Keen Company production of the 1943 comedy by John van Druten ("I Am a Camera," "I Remember Mama"). It's a sophisticated love triangle involving two New York actresses and a G.I. awaiting assignment in the early days of the Second World War. The characters are adrift, pursuing fame or fulfillment or a gay old time with no strings attached. It's all informed by the awareness of a dangerous, uncertain future, and the seemingly frothy dialogue packs a surprising resonance. The handsome cast—Elizabeth Bunch, Nick Toren, and Megan Byrne—provide just the right mixture of sweetness, sass, and sincerity. (Mint Theatre, 311 W. 43rd St. 315-0231. Closes Jan. 20.)

## LONG RUNS

**AIDA**
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.

**BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES**
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

**CABARET**
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

**CHICAGO**
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

**CONTACT**
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.

**DE LA GUARDA**
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.

**FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.

**42ND STREET**
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

**THE FULL MONTY**
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.

**I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE**
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

**THE LION KING**
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

**LES MISÉRABLES**
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

**LOVE, JANIS**
Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.

**PERFECT CRIME**
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.

**THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

**THE PRODUCERS**
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

**PROOF**
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.

**RENT**
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.

**STOMP**
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.

**THE SYRINGA TREE**
Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.

**THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE**
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.

**TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING**
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

**THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES**
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

## DANCE

**NEW YORK CITY BALLET**

Jan. 16 at 8: "Soirée," "Quartet for Strings," "Polyphonia," and "Jeu de Cartes." ♦ Jan. 17 at 8: "Kammermusik No. 2," "Duo Concertant," "Valse Triste," and "Cortège Hongrois." ♦ Jan. 18 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "Mozartiana," and "The Four Temperaments." ♦ Jan. 19 at 2: "Telemann Overture Suite in E Minor," "La Sonnambula," and "Jeu de Cartes." ♦ Jan. 19 at 8: "Tributary," "The Four Temperaments," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 2." ♦ Jan. 20 at 3: "Kammermusik No. 2," "Valse Triste," "Soirée," and "The Four Seasons." ♦ Jan. 22 at 7:30: "Raymonda Variations," "Hallelujah Junction," "Zakouski," and "Theme and Variations." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 870-5570. Through Feb. 24.)

**"ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT"**

The annual festival of contemporary dance. **Jane Comfort** has set "Asphalt," her funky Faulknerian dance-opera about tangled, taboo bloodlines, in a decaying New York building, where a homeless d.j. meets a lap dancer with dreams of Paris and modern dance. He tells her he's from nowhere (never mind that his name is Racine). She leads him down to a subterranean rave where illbient dancing spirits guide him "through the crumbling facts of his history," Comfort says. "And he's got to go through those facts to come out clean." Additional guides include a preacher in white and two singers in the pit humming Toshi Reagon's gospel-inspired tunes. Jan. 15 and Jan. 18 at 8 and Jan. 19 at 2. ♦ **Molissa Fenley:** Jan. 16 and Jan. 19 at 8 and Jan. 20 at 2 and 7:30. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

**"PRIVATE LIVES OF DANCERS"**

"We know that the reason the ballerina falls to the floor in Balanchine's 'Serenade' is because somebody tripped in rehearsal," says the antic postmodern choreographer David Gordon. "Balanchine told." In his "new and used duets," Gordon pulls the same sort of prank. "Lately, I've been listening in on the conversations dancers have when they're warming up and, say, we're bombing Afghanistan. In 'Private Lives of Dancers,' you see the everyday junk that has usually disappeared by the time the audience arrives becoming the pristine object, from moth to butterfly—all the stages." (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Jan. 17-20 at 8:30.)

**TURKU**

The troupe, five musicians and the Zafira Dance Company, a contemporary belly-dance ensemble, performs updated versions of the songs and dances of the nomadic peoples of the Silk Road, including folk dances from Turkish, Persian, Uzbek, Kurdish, Caucasian, and Romany sources. (Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4600, ext. 25. Jan. 19 at 8.)

**JENNIFER MONSON DANCE AND ZEENA PARKINS**

The dancer and choreographer Monson collaborates with the composer Parkins on "Atlas of Holes: Pitfall," "Dug/Out," and "Crater." (Galapagos, 70 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 718-382-5188. Jan. 17-19 at 8.)

## NIGHT LIFE
## CONCERTS

**THE ROOTS**

Hip-hop groups generally aren't known for their musicianship, but this long-standing Philadelphia outfit uses real instruments to create an authentically funky, quintessentially musical (as opposed to digital) backdrop. On record, they've jammed with the saxophonist Dave Murray and the jazz vocalist Cassandra Wilson; live, they love to cover old rap classics and create all manner of blissful havoc. Expect principal members Black Thought (lyrics) and ?uestlove (drums) to take extra pride in their performance as they bring songs from

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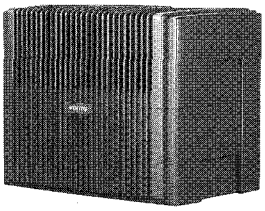

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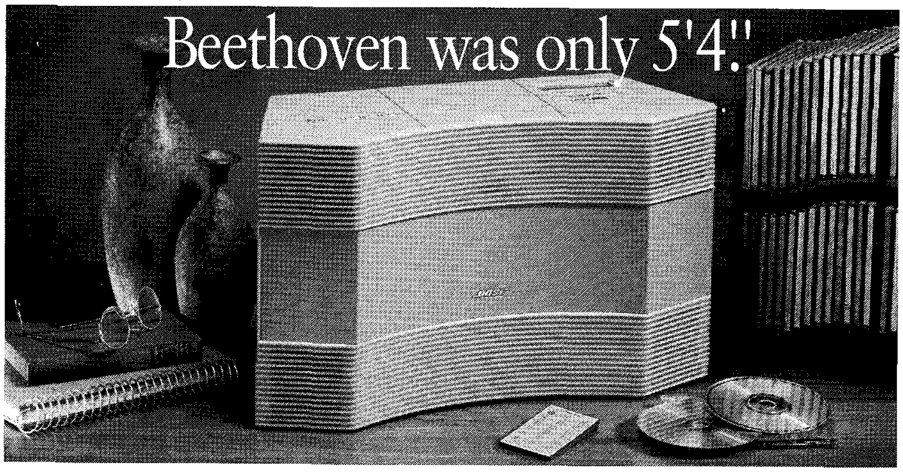

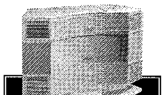

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their forthcoming album, "Phrenology," to the home of the New York Philharmonic. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Jan. 17 at 8.)

**ZLATNE USTE GOLDEN FESTIVAL**
The twelve-piece brass band headlines two nights of Balkan music. (Hungarian House, 213 E. 82nd St. Jan. 18 at 8:45. ♦ Good Shepherd School, 620 Isham St., at Cooper St., near 207th St. and Broadway. Jan. 19 at 6. For more information about both shows, call 544-8260.)

**WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE**
In the early eighties, after spending much of the previous decade working with the minimalist composer Steve Reich, the percussionist **Glen Velez** became enamored of the frame drum, an ancient instrument (references to it appear in Anatolian cave paintings from the sixth century B.C.) with a worldwide reach: the Irish bodhran, the Turkish *delbek*, and the North African *tar* are just a few of its manifestations. Velez's contribution was to popularize the frame drum as a solo instrument, and he is joined here by Steve Gorn on the *bansuri* (a type of flute) and Bassam Saba on the lute for a cross-cultural evening. (Haft Auditorium, Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. For more information, call 545-7536. Jan. 19 at 8.)

**THE NEW YORK GUITAR FESTIVAL**
The 92nd Street Y caps off its annual gathering of fingerboard wizards with a daylong marathon featuring performances by Andy Summers, Bill Frisell, Bucky Pizzarelli, the Assad Brothers, and other masters from the worlds of popular, jazz, and classical music. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500. Jan. 20 starting at noon. See also Makor, below, and Classical Music—Recitals.)

**SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK**
The all-female a-cappella quintet presents its annual concert for children, commemorating the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Washington Irving High School, 40 Irving Pl., at 16th St. 307-7171. Jan. 20 at 2.)

**LIL' POOKIE & THE HEARTBREAKERS**
An evening of top-shelf zydeco music. (La Belle Époque, 827 Broadway, at 13th St. For more information, call 685-7597. Jan. 20 at 7:30.)

**TENACIOUS D**
Last year, as the comedians Jack Black and Kyle Gass took their twisted underground acoustic-guitar/metal act mainstream with a concert tour and a self-titled début album, the mainstream opened its arms wide. As Black consolidates his fame as a movie star (after his show-stealing performance in "High Fidelity," he co-starred in "Shallow Hal" and is now in the new comedy "Orange County"), the mighty D moves forward. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Jan. 22 at 8.)

## CLUBS

*Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.*

**B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL**
237 W. 42nd St. (997-4144)—Jan. 16: Classic-rock nostalgia with **Mountain,** the seventies foursome best known for the hit "Mississippi Queen." Jan. 18: **Shemekia Copeland** may be the daughter of the guitar legend Johnny Copeland, but she's a powerhouse singer in her own right. She shares the bill with **Olu Dara,** the Mississippi-born avant-garde jazz cornettist who's also proven adept at the blues guitar. Jan. 20: The lewd comedian **Rudy Ray Moore,** also known as Dolemite, gets ready for another fifteen minutes of fame: the movie "Return of Dolemite 2002" is in postproduction.

**BLARNEY STAR**
43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Jan. 18: The Chicago-based fiddler **Liz Carroll** and the guitarist **John Doyle** offer an evening of Celtic music.

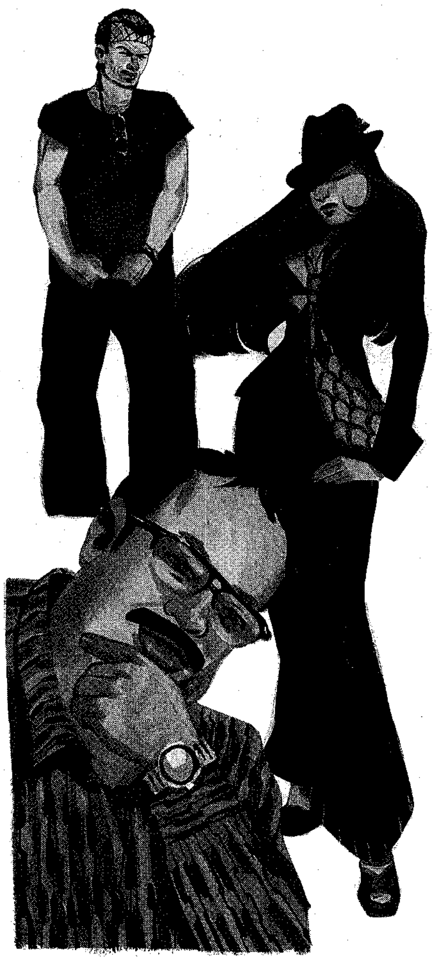
**BOTTOM LINE**
15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Jan. 17: The aptly titled program "Nothing but . . . Guitars," featuring David Bowie's longtime sideman **Carlos Alomar,** the classical master **Sharon Isbin,** and the eighties hard-rock guitar hero **Steve Vai.**

**BOWERY BALLROOM**
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Jan. 17: The curiously amusing, vaguely seductive electronic lounge act **Lovage** is the product of the wunderkind producer Dan the Automator (appearing here as Nathaniel Merriweather), who has enlisted vocalists Mike Patton (from Faith No More, Mr. Bungle, Tomahawk, and many other bands) and Jennifer Charles (from Elysian Fields). Lovage's name comes from an herb that is commonly used to reduce flatulence, according to the back of the group's sole album, "Music to Make Love to Your Old Lady By," and it's appropriate: the sound is a gas. The skewed Barry White-esque atmosphere satirizes the basic pop-love-song conceit with languid bedroom-minded grooves and humorous lyrics. Jan. 19-20: Grade-A Americana from Minneapolis's **Jayhawks,** who are playing an acoustic show.

**IRVING PLAZA**
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Jan. 16: Probably the most human of the four whiny bands depicted on VH-1's reality show "Bands on the Run," Texas's **Flickerstick** displayed an endearingly shoddy work ethic. Between Rex's guitar theatrics, Dominic's burly drumming, and Brandon's soaring vocals, however, their compelling take on alternative rock mitigates their otherwise dysfunctional shenanigans. Jan. 19: **Robert Earl Keen,** a singer-songwriter who, like fellow-Texans Steve Earle and Jimmie Dale Gilmore, packs a lot of hard-earned wisdom into his disarming tales of life on the road.

**JOE'S PUB**
425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—Jan. 16-17 and Jan. 21-22: The comedian **Sandra Bernhard** and her five-piece rock-and-roll band set out to prove that the age of irony has yet to end.

**KNITTING FACTORY**
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Jan. 19: **Gary Lucas,** whose distinctive guitar stylings have backed such diverse luminaries as the experimental-rock legend Captain Beefheart and the ill-fated angelic troubadour Jeff Buckley, unplugs for a solo acoustic turn in the intimate Old Office space.



*Lovage, at the Bowery Ballroom.*

ZOHAR LAZAR

**MAKOR**
35 W. 67th St. (601-1000)—Jan. 15: The New York Guitar Festival gets under way when the Canadian **Kevin Breit,** a veteran of Paul Simon's, Herbie Hancock's, and k. d. lang's bands, teams up with the percussionist **Cyro Baptista** for an evening of duets. Jan. 16: The festival continues with the blues guitarist **Woody Mann.** Jan. 17: The downtown veteran **Marc Ribot** performs an early show with the avant-garde percussionist **Ikue Mori.** The late show finds Ribot duelling with the saxophonist (and former leader of the No-Wave noisemakers the Contortions) **James Chance.** Jan. 19 belongs to **Yosi Piamenta,** the guitarist lovingly known in these parts as the Hasidic Hendrix.

**MERCURY LOUNGE**
217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Jan. 17: The Brooklyn ensemble **Les Sans Culottes** plays raunchy faux-French rock that's both a sendup of and a tribute to late-period Serge Gainsbourg and punchy *yé-yé* girl pop. Jan. 18: Raucous surf rock from men in Mexican wrestling masks is the specialty of **Los Straightjackets.** Jan. 19: **Donna the Buffalo,** a winning ensemble from Ithaca, New York, which seasons its country sound with a touch of reggae.

**TONIC**
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Despite former memberships in such noisy punk and metal bands as God Is My Co-Pilot, Helmet, and the Pain Teens, the musicians in the **Moonlighters** (here on Jan. 19 for a midnight show) have shed the high decibels and angst of their past to practice an unlikely but lilting blend of Hawaiian folk music.

## JAZZ AND STANDARDS

**ARCI'S PLACE**
450 Park Ave. S., at 30th St. (532-4370)—Through Jan. 26: From the "Dukes of Hazzard" to "Annie Get Your Gun" to high-profile cabaret shows, it's been quite the long, strange trip for **Tom Wopat.** The question is, can he scale down his Broadway-sized charm to the confines of an intimate club?

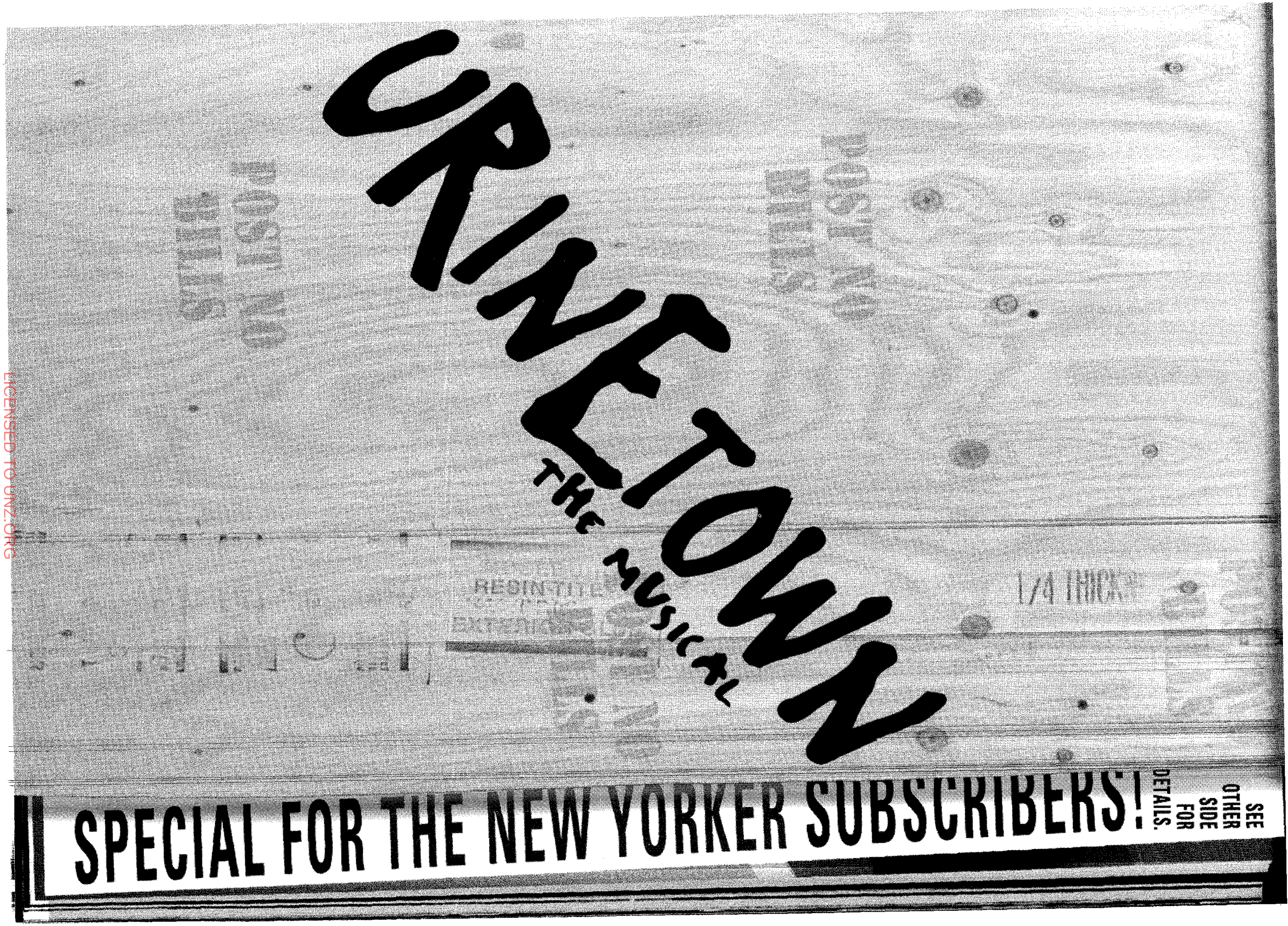
**BIRDLAND**
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Jan. 17-19: The **Sonny Fortune** quartet. An old reliable who should never be taken for granted, Fortune channels modal jazz strength and invention through the soprano and alto saxophones and flute, although his brawny tenor playing, heard to great effect in Elvin Jones's band, may be his ace. Dining.

**BLUE NOTE**
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Jan. 20: Pop fans know **Larry Carlton** from his superior session work with Steely Dan and Joni Mitchell, but smooth-jazz acolytes revere him for his fast-fingered yet easy-on-the-ears guitar stylings.

**FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY**
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (339-4095)—Through Feb. 2: There's little that **Cleo Laine** can't enhance with her mellifluous phrasing and notable range; here she concentrates on American popular song, delving into the work of Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen, Duke Ellington, and Kander and Ebb, among others. Laine's husband and longtime performance partner, the saxophonist **John Dankworth,** leads her backing ensemble.

**IRIDIUM**
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through Jan. 20: The inimitable pianist-singer **Mose Allison** combines a dry Mark Twain wit with the heart of a New York bebopper. He's here celebrating the release of "The Mose Chronicles: Volume 2, Live in London," a collection of some of his most poetically caustic songs including "Your Mind's on Vacation" and "Just Like Livin'." Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

**JAZZ GALLERY**
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (242-1063)—With his current album "Panoptic Modes," **Vijay Iyer** has made it clear that he's a contender on the new-jazz scene. He's a whirlwind pianist kept in check by the rigorous structures of his own memorable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## BOOK CURRENTS

*Various People, Interrupted*

TONY MILLIONAIRE

If the well-brought-up mental patients at McLean Hospital, in Belmont, Massachusetts, did not arrive suffering from folie de grandeur—one woman wandered the Olmsted-designed grounds dressed as a lady in a Thomas Gainsborough portrait—there was always the chance that association with the other guests might induce it. Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, Ray Charles, James Taylor, and John Nash (the mathematician whose life story is told in "A Beautiful Mind," a book by Sylvia Nasar and now a Ron Howard film) all spent time on the wards. McLean in its prime, the subject of Alex Beam's **GRACEFULLY INSANE** (PublicAffairs), was a place where rich families consigned their inconveniently strange relatives to lives of drinking Lapsang souchong, playing croquet, and trying treatments that sound like the offerings of a day spa: some melancholics were given Salt Glow Rubs, others underwent Wet Mitt Friction, and alcoholics got a Vapor Bath. Sometimes, the cures inspired bursts of creativity. Lowell wrote a poem about the "Mayflower screwballs" living in McLean's Bowditch Hall, where he and Nash were ward-mates in 1959.

In the mid-fifties, the American psychiatrist Karl Menninger announced that "gone forever is the notion that the mentally ill person is an exception. It is now accepted that most people have some degree of mental illness at some time." This philosophy, Roy Porter writes in **MADNESS: A BRIEF HISTORY** (Oxford), helped initiate our modern era of therapy and psychopharmacology. Porter traces the shifting conceptions of dementia through the ages—from Ajax to Anna O.—as Freud et al. transformed caring for the insane into a thriving scientific (and commercial) enterprise.

*—Dana Goodyear*

compositions. His quartet on Jan. 18 features the gifted saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa. The following night he brings in his trio with Aaron Stewart on reeds and Elliot Humberto Kavee on drums.

**KNITTING FACTORY**
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Jan. 17-18: The **Bobby Broom** trio. Broom, a fleet guitarist and veteran of Sonny Rollins's units, has recently been exploring the nexus of jazz and R. & B. by reimagining pop tunes of the sixties and seventies.

**SMOKE**
2751 Broadway, between 105th and 106th Sts. (864-6662)—Jan. 18-19: Drummers like **Al Foster** insure onstage swing. This invaluable and elegant veteran player celebrates his birthday with the support of the pianist **Jacky Terrasson** and his trio.

**VILLAGE VANGUARD**
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Jan. 20: Probably the most respected and in-demand mainstream jazz drummer, **Jeff (Tain) Watts** has powered the bands of, among many others, two Marsalis brothers, Wynton and Branford, but still can't resist the siren call of leading his own high-powered ensemble. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

## ART
## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Splendid Isolation: Art of Easter Island"** sparks wonderment about the speck in the South Pacific whose remarkable civilization rose and fell during the thousand years before the first white man made landfall, on Easter Sunday in 1722. Only a few works in the show—including a smallish example (weighing twelve hundred pounds) of the great stone heads—predate that fateful event; the rest are mostly nineteenth-century wooden objects from a final efflorescence of native genius. The art has a familiar Polynesian look, but it is haunted by the memories of a dying race whose past included disastrous civil wars and the astonishing cult of the Birdman: each year, the island's leader was selected on the basis of a perilous quest for an egg of the sooty tern. Wooden tablets display Easter Island's unique written language, which remains undecipherable to this day. Through Aug. 4. ♦ **"Extreme Beauty: The Body Transformed"** traces ideals of beauty from head to toe (with notable detours at the neck, bust, and waist) and the gloriously absurd fashions that ensue in their pursuit. In the words of the designer Christian Dior, "My dream is to save women from nature." Curator Harold Koda contrasts recent examples of haute couture with artifacts from other cultures and historic periods, so a Comme des Garçons organza ruff about as large as an end table shares the stage with an elaborately beaded Masai collar. Across the room a sixteenth-century metal breastplate sits near a chrome and plastic full-body garment by Thierry Mugler (a hybrid of unitard and armor) which resembles the spawn of R2-D2 and Barbarella. Through March 17. ♦ **"Quintet of Remembrance,"** a handsome, if somewhat pretentious, video by Bill Viola, is the first work in its medium to enter the Met's collection. Through May 5. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—The artist Ricci Albenda converts the lower level of the museum into three corridors, toying with perspective and playing spatial games in the gray area between architecture and sculpture. The first, a trompe-l'oeil mural of a corridor, greets viewers as they ride down the escalator. Around the corner, viewers find an actual corridor, the mirror image of the hallway depicted in the mural. A little further on, Albenda presents a shallow relief of the same image. This through-the-looking-glass installation recalls both the solemn James Turrell (of the crater in the desert) and the playful Viktor Vasarely (of the cubic illusions). Through May 21. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

**GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—For **"Brazil: Body & Soul,"** the Thomas Krens team has gone to new extremes, utterly transforming the museum and leaving one awed by the mega-exhibition's scope, design, audacity, and cost. The rotunda is now a Stygian theatre, with a massive baroque altarpiece in its center. From there, viewers ascend past ranks of polychromed Madonnas, carved lions, ex-votos, and tribal videos and arrive, finally, at a celestial ring of white rooms, where the baroque (which lasted nearly three centuries in Brazil) abruptly gives way to modernism. Through Jan. 27. ♦ **"Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People."** Through March 3. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The melancholy of small-town living may have a finer champion in Hopper, but if it's the latent menace of a clotted rural sky you want, Charles Burchfield's your man. This concise exhibition of works on paper, drawn from the museum's permanent collection, emphasizes watercolor, the medium for which Burchfield is best known, and the inclusion of several stilted engravings does little to alter that reputation. Rapture strikes when least expected, as a field of goldenrod becomes an exotic jungle of feathery stalks. Elsewhere, a shaft of white light transforms the trunk of a bare-branched tree in a cramped back yard into a celestial apparition. Through Jan. 20. ♦ **"Over the Line: The Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence."** Through Feb. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

**BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART**
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Eternal Egypt: Masterworks of Ancient Art from the British Museum,"** a modest blockbuster culled from the collections of the British Museum, opens with a group of rare wooden statuettes from the Old Kingdom. One of them still has a painted guideline running down the center of her torso. Equally fascinating is a drawing board, more than three thousand years old, with a mix of finished and practice motifs: a serene Pharaoh, a quail chick, and seven crude efforts at hands. But the show also offers plenty of moments of Ozymandian grandeur, among them a reclining lion in red granite (looking a good deal more formidable than his Fifth Avenue cousins) and a vast and trunkless head of Amenhotep III. Through Feb. 24. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

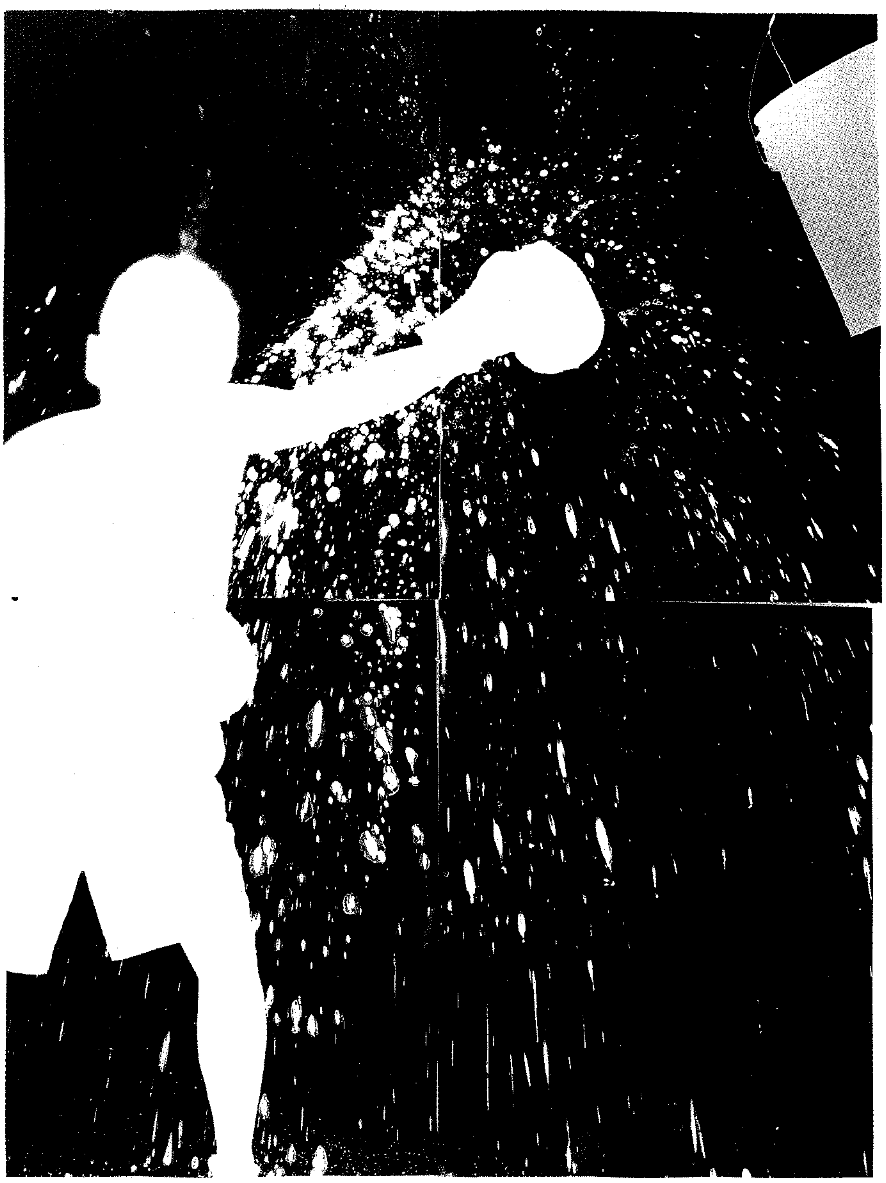
**AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM**
45 W. 53rd St. (977-7170)—The **"American Radiance"** exhibition arrays some four hundred items of folk art given to the museum by the chairman of its board, Ralph Esmerian. On view are some of the best of the best paintings by itinerant portraitists and landscapists, as well as Pennsylvania Dutch ceramics, decorated wedding documents, painted furniture, needlework, scrimshaw, and even walking sticks. The show is an epic poem of connoisseurship. Notice how the installation's design, in the museum's inventive new space, keeps everything distinct and alluring. Through June 2. ♦ **"Darger"** draws on the museum's immense holdings of works by the brilliant and worrisome Chicago recluse Henry Darger (1892-1973), whose usual pigeonholing as an "outsider" belies his genius. Beautifully composed and colored panoramas of children at play and, more often, at war illustrate Darger's fantasy novel "The Story of the Vivian Girls." His montage technique, involving traced images, looks ever less eccentric and more like a great innovation. But there is no gainsaying his psychosexual weirdness. Through June 23. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

**ASIA SOCIETY**
502 Park Ave. at 59th St. (288-6400)—Both Nilima Sheikh and Shahzia Sikander work in the vernacular of Indian miniature painting. Sheikh, an established artist in her native India, turned to miniatures mid-career in the seventies, tackling political subjects such as the practice of "dowry death," or bride burning (examples of which are included here). Her loose, sweeping strokes are more indebted to her training in a modernist,

Western style than to the conventional miniaturist's arsenal of single-haired brushes. Sikander was formally trained at an art school in Pakistan in the nineties before emigrating to the United States, and her work couples the impossible precision of the Mughal masters with a subversive whimsy (witness her mandala made of cowboy boots). Through Feb. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

**JEWISH MUSEUM**

Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—Slowed down by segregation and the Second Commandment, Jews were late to make their mark, so to speak, on the visual arts. **"The Emergence of Jewish Artists in Nineteenth-Century Europe"** samples twenty-one painters from this transitional epoch. Plenty of hokey temple and shtetl scenes are on view, along with a scattering of masterpieces by Camille Pissarro, Gauguin's friend Jacob Meyer de Haan, Max Lieberman, and Jozef Israels. The show also offers glimpses of some intriguing lesser-known talents. Among these are a whole clan of charming English Pre-Raphaelites named Solomon and the mysterious virtuoso Maurycy Gottleib, who was well on his way to becoming a sort of Galician Bougereau when he died at twenty-three. Through March 17. (Open Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Mondays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45 and Tuesday evenings until 9; and Fridays, 11 to 3.)



*"The Boxing Papers, Shinobara B," by Kunié Sugiura, at Tonkonow.*

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

*Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.*

**"MASTERPIECES OF RENAISSANCE ART" / VITTORIO AND TIEPOLO**

The gallery calls the show of eight religious sculptures mostly from the late fifteenth century "dazzlingly splendid," "extremely important," "immensely significant," etc. Although so much hyperbole puts one in a fault-finding mood, these really are extraordinary objects. The centerpiece, a Pietà attributed to Mantegna, has a gaunt beauty that's only enhanced by its pitted, ravaged surface. The accompanying show is an object lesson in Old Master draftsmanship. A set of seven sketches of a bearded nobleman by Tiepolo appear to be life studies. In fact they were drawn from a terra-cotta bust made more than a century earlier by Alessandro Vittorio. In the center of the room sits the bust itself, projecting an amiable weariness that Tiepolo captured from every angle. Through Feb. 2. (Salander O'Reilly, 20 E. 57th St. 879-6606.)

**"TRACES"**

In collaboration with Arte y Ritual, a Madrid gallery specializing in tribal art, Krugier has put together a beautiful installation that pairs modernist and "primitive" objects and images. Wary of the controversy that tainted MOMA's "Primitivism" exhibition, in 1984, the curators don't try to overplay the connections. Instead their installation suggests open-ended affinities, leaving us to decide, for instance, whether a slender dancing Imunu figure from New Guinea is a spiritual ancestor of the Miró and Picasso figures that flank it, or just an evocation of a similar aerobic excitement. Through Jan. 19. (41 E. 57th St. 755-7288.)

### *Short List*

**CHARLES BURCHFIELD**

Kennedy, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 541-9600.
Through Jan. 26.

**ANDY LENAGHAN**

George Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665.
Through Jan. 19.

**WADE SCHUMAN**

Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545.
Through Jan. 26.

## GALLERIES—CHELSEA

**CARL ANDRE**

Viewers are unlikely to be floored by this slight but time-consuming exhibition of the minimalist sculptor's "non-hierarchical, non-relational" poetry. The examples include scrambled versions of found texts and blocks of letters that suggest typing-class exercises: "JJJJJJJJJJJJJJJEEEEERRRRRSSSSSSSSRRRRRR," and so on. William Carlos Williams asserted that "if it ain't a pleasure, it ain't a poem." Andre seems to labor under the opposite notion: that it's a poem only if it gives no pleasure. Through Jan. 26. (Paula Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105.)

**KARIM NOURELDIN**

Noureldin has discarded sketches and architectural models for a more decisive redefinition of space. His trompe-l'oeil composition on the back wall of the Kunsthalle Basel suggests that the building leads into another dimension, much brighter and more streamlined. The glossy racing stripes around this small gallery offer a glimpse of those effects. Their playful illusions of speed and depth are broken only by a fuse box, painted over, and an electrical outlet, whose two plugs stand out bright white. Through Jan. 19. (Schoormans, 508 W. 26th St. 243-3159.)

**CAROL RHODES / AMY SILLMAN**

Two satisfying painters. Rhodes is Scottish, forty-one years old, and a newcomer here. She makes smallish, Luc Tuymans-esque pictures, summarily drawn and thinly painted in drab but glowing colors, of banal landscapes seen from the air. But as one looks, the sense of plodding visual description gives way to entranced suavities of paint. Sillman, a downtown favorite, shows "A Long Drawing"—sixteen panoramic gouaches that parade figurative, abstract, and decorative elements in the artist's improvisatory vein of outsiderish goofiness and Tantric delicacy. Is Sillman ever not inspired? This work's extended riff is catchy in the way of Ella Fitzgerald singing scat. Through Feb. 2. (Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 929-2262.)

**"GROUP SHOW"**

The gallery celebrates its third anniversary with a show of selected works which reaffirms the gallery's architectural bent. The collaborative duo LOT/EK contributes candy-colored rubber casts of shipping containers lit with neon: the results look as edible as gumdrops. Joel Sanders's architectural model of a bachelor pad (a pair of tiny barbells rests on a swath of Astroturf) is cleverly installed near Richard Barnes's eerie photographs of the Unabomber's cabin. Diller and Scofidio, designers of New York's Brasserie, are represented by a punch line of a sculpture entitled "Bad Press," in which a pair of white shirts are contorted into unlikely configurations, like origami laundry. Through Feb. 9. (Urbach, 526 W. 26th St. 627-0974).

**"HUMANOID"**

Feisty, quirky, and bawdy, this grab-bag show reminds us of the myriad ways that bodily allusions

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have recharged recent abstraction. Familiar-seeming protuberances are everywhere: bosomy swellings, limblike taperings, colonic bulbs, and even a recognizable pelvis or three. One highlight is Jerry Mischak's tottering slender column, so tightly wrapped in colored tape that it suggests a FedEx version of mummification. Through Jan. 19. (Frederieke Taylor, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-0992.)

**"YELLOW BRICK ROAD"**
Forget about lions and tigers and bears; the big "oh my" here is provided by Ron Amstutz's wild-eyed deer, which greets viewers upon entering. Less giddily absurd but equally arresting is a large-scale grisaille drawing by Colin Hunt, a primordial landscape whose botanical specimens—spiky ferns, stunted palms—are pestered by a swarm of winged insects. At first glance Amy Vogel's spare watercolor-and-pencil scroll seems to be a study in restraint with the occasional lipstick-colored curlicue dangling like a paper lantern. But close inspection reveals a teeming cast of characters, a fairy-tale version of Sue Williams. Through Jan. 27. (White Columns, 320 W. 13th St. 924-4212.)

### *Short List*

**ANTON VIDOKLE**
Audiello, 526 W. 26th St. 675-9082.
Through Jan. 19.

## GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

**"THE RUSSIAN ENDING"**
Before the German novelist W. G. Sebald's death in an automobile accident last month, a passage from his book "The Rings of Saturn" was chosen as this show's epigraph, as if to emphasize the ways in which the English artist Tacita Dean's work echoes the writer's rapt, ironic mournfulness. "The Russian Ending" consists of twenty photogravures from antique postcards of sinking ships, scarred battlefields, and other disasters. (It seems that Danish movies were once made with happy endings for the American market and sad ones for Russia.) The images bear scribbled mise-en-scène directions by the artist. Dean does familiar sorts of things—her postcard works are like pocket Kiefers—but she does it with a saturnine concentration that makes all the difference. Through Feb. 9. (Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441.)

### *Short List*

**LYNNE YAMAMOTO / JUDY FOX**
P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642.
Through Jan. 19.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

**PAVEL BANKA**
At first glance, it seems that this Czech photographer shoots only moving subjects—waving seagrass, lapping waves, and migrating birds. But some of the blurred images turn out to be still scenes set in motion: Banka hits the camera or sways slightly so that the trees in a densely growing forest trail across the film. Through Feb. 9. (Klotz/Sirmon, 511 W. 25th St. 741-4764.)

**JERRY SPAGNOLI**
These contemporary daguerrotypes of elegantly spotlit body parts can't help but look otherworldly, largely due to the spooky effects that occur when the gallery light hits the silver backing of the glass plates. Minutely detailed pores and follicles appear to come to life, especially in the images of hands, which can look ready to skedaddle at your bidding, like Thing in "The Addams Family." Through Jan. 26. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070.)

**KUNIÉ SUGIURA**
To make her notorious photograms, "The Kitten Papers," Sugiura left photosensitive paper under newborn cats. The roughhousing of the furry subjects covered the paper with blurred shadows, and their pee left dramatic, high-contrast spots. "The Artist Papers" and "The Boxing Papers" include other liquids applied directly to the negative: Jasper Johns's paint-splattered handprint appears on his portrait, and the spots around Ushio Shinohara's boxing glove suggest blood and sweat. Through Feb. 2. (Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. 255-8450.)

**EDWARD WESTON**
The Weston family contributed many items from their private collections, making this exhibition of vintage prints into a review of sorts; call it Edward Weston's greatest hits. The pictures include work in portraiture, landscape, and still-life, and most allude to the artists in Weston's circle either directly—the painter Diego Rivera is seen from a low angle with the brim of his hat floating above his head like a halo—or elliptically, as in "Clouds, Mexico" (1924) and the modernist "Egg and Bone" (1930), with their echoes of the work of Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O'Keeffe. Through Jan. 26. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

**"STRINDBERG AND PHOTOGRAPHY"**
This exhibition strives to connect Strindberg's photography to larger currents in his written work (Swedenborg, naturalism, the occult), but the sheer number of portraits and self-portraits of the shutterbug playwright turn it into a survey of his murderous gaze and flaring moustache. The rest of the works—casually off-kilter family snapshots, experimental photograms of crystals, and "celestographs"—will be of interest both to students of early photography and to theatregoers fresh from "The Dance of Death" on Broadway. Through March 2. (Scandinavia House, 58 Park Ave., at 38th St. 879-9779.)

## CLASSICAL CD REVIEW

*Best classical albums of 2001.*

**"Haydn: The Complete String Quartets," Angeles Quartet** (Philips)—Haydn virtually invented the string quartet, and no group has made the entire journey of sixty-eight works more inviting than this leading West Coast ensemble, who bring distinctively American virtues—warm emotion; rich, powerful tone; and faultless technical command—to music whose grace and concentration are the embodiment of the European Enlightenment.

**"Verdi: Falstaff"** (Deutsche Grammophon)—Last year brought a torrent of concerts and recordings to honor the centenary of Verdi's death, but Claudio Abbado's version of the composer's final opera stands as an extraordinary, ebullient tribute. Bryn Terfel makes for a jovial and vocally pliant Sir John; the rest of the cast, including Thomas Hampson, Adrianne Pieczonka, Dorothea Röschmann, and the young Russian tenor Daniil Shtoda, is splendid; and the Berlin Philharmonic plays not only with jewel-like precision but with a delicacy and radiance that can only be called love.

**"David Lang: The Passing Measures"** (Cantaloupe)—This heartfelt, mournful piece, a wordless, forty-two-minute quasi-concerto for women's chorus, bass clarinet, and amplified orchestra, is a welcome surprise from a composer whose always deft and subtle work has too often seemed ironic and arch. The clarinettist Marty Ehrlich, the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, and members of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Chorus, conducted by Paul Herbert, provide a dignified performance, giving gentle life to the work's lustrous waves of color.

**"Liszt: Années de Pèlerinage—Italie; Venezia e Napoli," Frederic Chiu** (Harmonia Mundi)—These breathtaking travel sketches are among the greatest of Liszt's piano pieces, so full of tenderness, drama, and compositional daring that they never seem to age. The playing of Chiu, a young American pianist long resident in France, is a winning combination of textural clarity, glowing color, and bravura technique.

**"Dreams and Fables: Gluck Italian Arias," Cecilia Bartoli** (Decca)—Bartoli, deeply responsive to the composer's gravitas and subtle nuances of character—and brilliantly accompanied by the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin—brings tonal richness, explosive diction, and a fiery intensity to a gallery of sorrowful Baroque heroines.

**"Boulez Conducts Varèse"** (Deutsche Grammophon)—Like its composer, the music of Edgard Varèse (1883-1965) is a fusion of exacting French precision and raw American energy—perfect for the talents of Pierre Boulez and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, who make this selection of brassy, brutalist orchestral works (including "Arcana" and "Amériques") sound thrillingly surreal.

**"Osvaldo Golijov: La Pasión Según San Marcos" ("St. Mark Passion")** (Hänssler Classic)—Before it caused a sensation at its first U.S. performances, with the Boston Symphony, this startling new work enjoyed its world première at the 2000 European Music Festival in Stuttgart, where this live recording (featuring the excellent Schola Cantorum de Caracas) was made. Golijov, a daring and disciplined young Argentine-American composer, combines raucous Latin rhythms and haunting melodic inspirations from his Eastern European Jewish background into a grand tableau that is worthy of the tradition of J. S. Bach.

**"Rachmaninoff: Symphonic Dances & Suites for 2 Pianos," Emanuel Ax and Yefim Bronfman** (Sony Classical)—This sparkling recording arrives just as Rachmaninoff's music receives a new wave of critical attention. Ax and Bronfman are strikingly different artists—one poetic and refined, the other athletically lyrical—but their account of the two-piano version of the "Symphonic Dances," better known as an orchestral piece, shows us the work's sinew and bone without sacrificing its seductive surface. The two Suites, dispatched with great zest and charm, are supremely entertaining.

**"Johannes Brahms: The Symphonies," Chamber Orchestra of Europe** (Ondine)—So many performances of Brahms's orchestral music are full of passion and expertise but have all the coloristic variety of a Sunday pot roast. These live recordings, featuring the hypnotically accurate playing of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, are revelations. With the strings reduced to a minimum, the musicians have nowhere to hide: brass and wind timbres emerge with bracing clarity, violinists flex their melodic muscle, inner string parts pulse and gleam. The conductor Paavo Berglund's interpretations may have a bit less emotional steam than others', but it is refreshing, for once, to hear the pieces do the work themselves.

*—Russell Platt*

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**INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY**
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 857-0000—**"Another Vietnam: Pictures of the War from the Other Side"**; **"The First Snapshots,"** an exhibition of candids shot by amateur photographers in the eighteen-hundreds with the earliest Kodak cameras; and **"Hidden Truths: Bloody Sunday 1972"** All through March 17. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

### *Short List*

**EUGÈNE ATGET**
Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444.
Through Jan. 19.
**E. J. BELLOCQ**
Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 627-2410.
Through Feb. 2.
**PERRY OGDEN**
Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-3900.
Through Jan. 26.
**RICHARD ROTHMAN**
Rodgers, 529 W. 20th St. 414-9810.
Through Feb. 16.

## AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

**SOTHEBY'S**
Jan. 17 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: "Important Americana." The first two sessions of the sale feature a wide selection of lithographs, furniture, Chinese export porcelain, folk-art paintings, and decorative objects. ♦ Jan. 18 at 10:15 A.M.: The second day begins with "100 Years of American Silver," including a pair of presentation swords and scabbards given to an officer of the Civil War battleship U.S.S. Monitor, and the inventory of the First Church of Christ, Milford, Connecticut. ♦ Jan. 18 at 11:15 A.M.: A selection of Americana from the collection of Richard and Joy Kanter. ♦ Jan. 18 at 2: "The American Folk Art Collection of Sandy and Julie Palley." ♦ Jan. 19 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: The collection of Mr. and Mrs. Lammot du Pont Copeland, taken from their Delaware estate, Mount Cuba. Amid the broad selection of American silver, furniture, and decorative objects are a number of major pieces, including a Chippendale chest-on chest, circa 1765, with case carving attributed to Nicholas Bernard and Martin Jugiez (estimated to sell for approximately one million dollars). ♦ Jan. 20 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: More classic American furniture, art works, and decorative objects. The morning session offers property from the collection of Gunston Hall Plantation, the home of the Revolutionary War patriot George Mason; in the afternoon, there's a selection of items from the firm of Israel Sack, Inc. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)
**CHRISTIE'S**
Jan. 18 at 10 A.M. and 2: "Important American Folk Art, Furniture, and Silver." The afternoon session features a pair of French steel-mounted "saddle" pistols formerly owned by George Washington, Andrew Jackson, and the Marquis de Lafayette. ♦ Jan. 19 at 10 A.M.: "English Pottery from the Collection of the Late Robert J. Kahn." ♦ Jan. 22 at 10 A.M. and 2: Chinese Imari porcelain from the collection of Benjamin F. Edwards III, the largest such array ever assembled by an individual. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)
**SWANN**
Jan. 17 at 10:30 A.M.: "Modern Press & Illustrated Books," featuring illustrations by such artists as George Barbier, Kay Nielsen, and Maxfield Parrish. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)
**WINTER ANTIQUES SHOW**
The forty-eighth annual show, a benefit for the East Side House Settlement social-service agency in Mott Haven, the Bronx. (Hilton New York, 1335 Sixth Ave. 718-292-7392. Jan. 20-27.)
**NEW YORK CERAMICS FAIR**
Forty prominent dealers of fine porcelain, glass, and pottery. (National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 289-0496. Jan. 17-20.)

## CLASSICAL MUSIC
## OPERA

**METROPOLITAN OPERA**
**"Tosca,"** with Catherine Malfitano, Franco Farina, and James Morris; Daniel Oren conducts. (Jan. 16 at 8 and Jan. 19 at 1:30.) ♦ The exuberant new production of **"Die Frau Ohne Schatten,"** Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannstahl's wacky, grandiose fairy-tale opera, receives its final performance of the season. Herbert Wernicke, the director and designer, makes maximum use of the house's hydraulic capacities and of a strong cast led by the sumptuous Deborah Voigt in the title role, Adrienne Dugger as the Dyer's Wife, Reinhild Runkel as the conniving Nurse, and Thomas Moser and Wolfgang Brendel as the heroically hapless men in their lives. Under Christian Thielemann, the Met orchestra sounds more luminous than ever. (Jan. 17 at 7.) ♦ **"Il Barbiere di Siviglia,"** with Ruth Ann Swenson, Juan Diego Flórez, Dwayne Croft, John Del Carlo, and Simone Alaimo; Yves Abel. (Jan. 18 and Jan. 21 at 8.) ♦ **"Don Carlo,"** with Veronica Villarroel, Dolora Zajick, Eduardo Villa (his début, in the title role), Vassily Gerello, Paata Burchuladze, and Vladimir Ognovenko; Paul Nadler. (Jan. 19 at 7.) ♦ With Richard Margison replacing Villa. (Jan. 22 at 7.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)
**NEW YORK GILBERT AND SULLIVAN PLAYERS**
Albert Bergeret conducts **"The Mikado,"** the final installment of a mini-festival devoted to the major Savoy operas. Much joy and rapture is promised. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Jan. 18 at 8, Jan. 19 at 3 and 8, and Jan. 20 at 3.)
**"THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK"**
Encompass Opera Theatre presents a return engagement of Grigori Frid's one-woman opera, with the soprano Dunja Pechstein. Nancy Rhodes is the director; Sybille Werner conducts. (Connelly Theatre, 220 W. 4th St. 206-1515. Jan. 17-19 at 8 and Jan. 20 at 3. Through Feb. 3.)
**BRONX OPERA COMPANY**
Two final performances of **"Boccaccio,"** Franz von Suppé's merry smash hit from 1879, sung in English. The conductor is Michael Spierman. (John Jay College Theatre, Tenth Ave. at 58th St. For information about tickets, call 718-960-8833. Jan. 18-19 at 8.)
**HENRY STREET CHAMBER OPERA**
The bold little company, which offers innovative productions of rarities in a nineteenth-century jewel-box theatre, presents an intriguing double bill of tragic love stories, one set among ancient nobility (Purcell's **"Dido and Aeneas"**), the other among the Gypsies of the Camargue (Milhaud's rarely performed **"Les Malheurs d'Orphée"**). (Harry De Jur Playhouse, Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 279-4200. Jan. 19 and Jan. 22 at 8. These are the final performances.)

## TABLES FOR TWO

**DB BISTRO MODERNE**
55 W. 44th St. (391-2400)—For all his four-star achievements, Daniel Boulud, the D.B. of db and the Daniel of Daniel, may soon wind up best known for his burger. The chef concocted it privately a few years ago, in joking solidarity with José Bové and the French farmers' union in their protests against McDonald's. Last June, when he opened his sleek new bistro next to the Algonquin hotel, he went public with it.

For twenty-nine dollars, the DB Burger comes with a silver julep cup of frites and a surprise hidden in the ground sirloin: a complex hash of black truffle and sautéed foie gras where the rare center should be. It's an adult take on a back-yard classic—rich, well travelled, charred in the right places, and a little jaded. Boulud calls it "the most successful dish I ever created."

Although no other item gets quite so theatrical, the rest of the menu sticks to this brand of renovation, offering haute-cuisine versions of home-cooking favorites. In most cases, the slight tweaks—the lobster ravioli come wrapped in sage pasta, the skate grandmère arrives on a homey artichoke mirepoix—smack more of Proust than of Barnum, and sometimes the subtle effects get lost in the midtown lunch-hour clamor. But at dinner, the winter specials (listed under "slow-cooked dishes of the day") offer big sis-boom-bah flavor; if you've ever wanted to try pigs' feet, this is your chance. Deboned, poached in white wine, stuffed back in the skin like a sausage, and served sliced on a bed of lentils cooked in vermouth, they're the sort of once-in-a-lifetime dish which makes you turn to your neighbor and proselytize. But the three women at the next table demurred. "We're from Alabama," one said. "We know what pigs get into with their feet." (Open Mondays through Saturdays for lunch and dinner, Sundays for dinner only. Entrées $25-$32.)

—*Kevin Conley*

## ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC**
Hearing John Adams's "The Wound Dresser" is always something of a shock; he responds to Walt Whitman's grim reportage of a Civil War hospital ward not with dissonant rage but with music of gentle beauty—the radiant innocence that the poet glimpsed in the soldiers' mangled souls and bodies. Thomas Hampson is the baritone soloist, in a program that also includes Brahms's Symphony No. 1 and the U.S. première of Peter Ruzicka's "Nachtstück"; Christian Thielemann conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Jan. 16 and Jan. 18-19 at 8 and Jan. 22 at 7:30.)
**PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA**
The pianist Murray Perahia is the orchestra's guest soloist for an all-Beethoven program (the Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 3 and the "Egmont" Overture), conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Jan. 22 at 8.)

## RECITALS

**THE ASSAD BROTHERS**
Sérgio and Odair Assad present a duo-guitar program spanning three centuries (including music by Debussy, Rodrigo, and Domenico Scarlatti). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500. Jan. 16 at 8. **Note:** For more information about New York Guitar Festival concerts, see Night Life.)
**LYRIC CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY**
Over the last three years, this series—like its model, the Marlboro Festival—has offered a mix of performances by both promising young artists and renowned professionals. In their latest offering, the young musicians of the Lyric Clarinet Trio (the clarinettist Igor Begelman, the violinist Philip Quint, and the pianist Tatiana Goncharova) present a program of Weber, Stravinsky (the "Suite Italienne" and the Suite from "The Soldier's Tale"), and Paul Schoenfeld. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 279-4200. Jan. 16 at 8.)
**BARGEMUSIC**
Two viola-centric programs, coördinated by Paul Neubauer. Jan. 17-18 at 7:30: The flutist Ransom Wilson and the pianist Anne-Marie McDermott join Neubauer in music by Bach, Prokofiev (the Flute Sonata in D Major), Presser, Schumann (Three Romances for Viola and Piano), and Duruflé. ♦ Jan. 19 at 7:30 and Jan. 20 at 4: Brahms's rarely heard Trio for Viola, Cello and Piano—far better known in its original version, with clarinet instead of viola—highlights a program that also includes works by Hindemith, Schumann, and

Beethoven. Neubauer and McDermott are joined by the cellist Fred Sherry. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

**MODERNWORKS!**

Somehow, the idea of Finnish composers writing music for cello and accordion has a crazy kind of appeal. The cellist Madeleine Shapiro and the accordion player Mikko Luomo offer a recital of new and recent works (by such composers as Magnus Lindberg, Jukka Tiensuu, and the Finnish-American modernist Charles Wuorinen), at Christ and St. Stephen's Church. (120 W. 69th St. 362-0962. Jan. 17 at 8.)

**PAUL O'DETTE**

The eminent lutenist performs a program featuring music from the Italian Renaissance. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802, ext. 4428. Jan. 17 at 8.)

**MARILYN HORNE FOUNDATION RECITAL**

In a windup of three days of master classes, the foundation presents its annual recital, "From Vienna to Broadway," featuring, among others, the soprano Monique McDonald, the baritone Keith Phares, the pianist Brian Zeger, and Marvin Hamlisch (making a special guest appearance). (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. 721-6500. Jan. 18 at 7:30.)

**MICHELLE DE YOUNG AND KEVIN MURPHY**

The mezzo-soprano and the pianist, both noted young Americans, present a concert featuring works by Schumann, Mahler, Barber, and Daniel Sutton ("Six Songs on Poems of D. H. Lawrence," a première). (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Jan. 18 at 8.)

**PARTHENIA: "REST SWEET NYMPHS"**

Phil Kline, the downtown composer and boom-box artist, spices up a program of Elizabethan music with "When I Had a Voice," in which a mezzo-soprano and two trebles (Alexandra Montano and her two kids) add their talents to Parthenia's consort of viols. (St. Francis of Assisi Church, 135 W. 31st St. Jan. 17 at 1:15. No tickets required.)

**LARRY BELL AND FRIENDS**

A fiftieth-birthday retrospective by the versatile Boston composer, whose music mixes modern European elements with the twang of his Southern heritage. Featuring the cellist Eric Bartlett and the saxophonist Kenneth Radnofsky. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Jan. 17 at 8.)

**KROUMATA**

The young Swedish percussion ensemble makes its New York début, performing works by Xenakis, Takemitsu, and Sven-David Sandström. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Jan. 19 at 8.)

**FORTUNE'S WHEEL: "PASTOURELLE"**

A noted young American ensemble of voices, harp, and fiddle presents music by Machaut, de la Halle, and anonymous trouvères. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Jan. 20 at 5.)

**DEBORAH VOIGT**

Music of the early twentieth century—including songs by Strauss, Zemlinsky, Gounod, and Charles Griffes—is the focus for this Alice Tully Hall recital, which will give listeners a chance to sample Voigt's rich, beauteous soprano in a more intimate setting than the Met. The pianist is Brian Zeger. (721-6500. Jan. 20 at 2.)

**MUSIC AT MERKIN CONCERT HALL**

Jan. 20 at 3: The New York Philharmonic Ensembles series presents several of the orchestra's virtuoso soloists (including the violist Rebecca Young, the flutist Robert Langevin, and the percussionist Daniel Druckman) performing works by Balissat, Schulhoff, and Brahms (the Piano Quartet in A Major). ♦ Jan. 20 at 7:30: The harpsichordist Bradley Brookshire plays music by Bach. ♦ Jan. 22 at 2: Concertante, a vibrant young New York ensemble, performs string sextets by Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Strauss (the prelude to "Capriccio"). ♦ Jan. 22 at 8: The Da Capo Chamber Players (with the soprano Lucy Shelton) present music by Birtwistle, Kernis ("Love Scenes"), Carter, Jonathan Harvey, and André Previn ("Vocalise"). (129 W. 67th St. 501-3330.)

**EMERSON STRING QUARTET**

Haydn's quartets have recently been a special focus of the group's activities; the Emerson brings to them not only its unparalleled technique but, of late, an increasing warmth and sympathy. This concert includes several of the nicknamed pieces, including "The Rider" and the "Complements" Quartets. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Jan. 20 at 5.)

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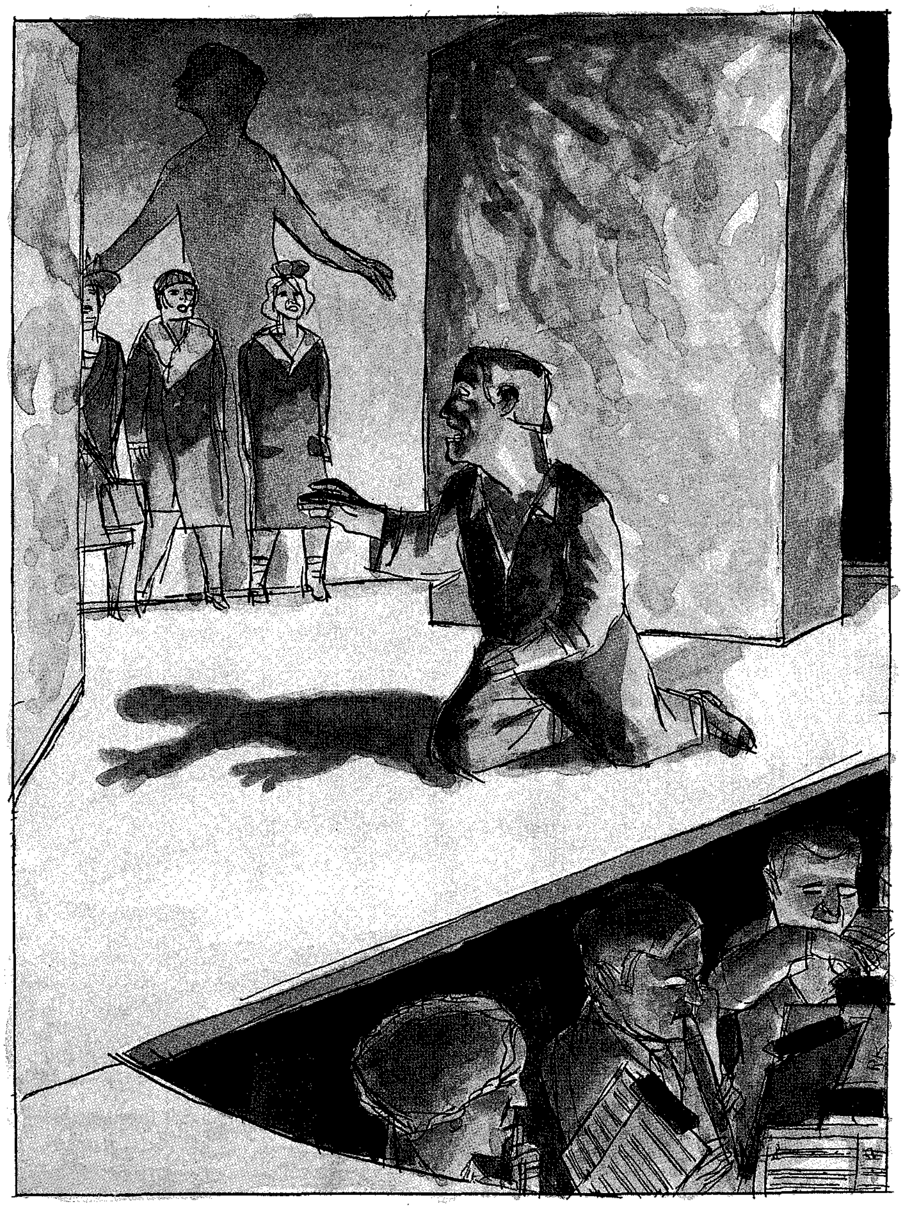
## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**"COMICS FROM GROUND ZERO"**

Back in 1979, the Lower East Side artists Seth Tobocman and Peter Kuper started a polemical magazine and christened it *World War 3 Illustrated.* Taking an impassioned, activist point of view, its illustrators devoted issues to such broad subjects as religion and fascism as well as more personal experiences like squatting in an abandoned building. Then came September 11th, and the artists responded with pulse-raising immediacy and detail—the latest issue is a black-and-white account of the tragedy and its aftermath. On Jan. 22 from 8 to 11, Sue Coe, Tom Tomorrow, Ron English, and other contributors join Tobocman and Kuper for multimedia performances based on their pieces in the new issue. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., between 9th and 10th Sts. Tickets at the door.)



*Henry Street Chamber Opera presents Milhaud's "Les Malheurs d'Orphée," which shares a double bill with Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas" on Jan. 19 and Jan. 22.*

BEN KATCHOR

**READINGS**

Jan. 16 at 7: By Nell Casey, from her recent book, "Unholy Ghost: Writers on Depression." (Book-Court, 163 Court St., Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Jan. 17 at 7: By Mark Kurlansky, the author of "Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World," from his latest book, "Salt: A World History." (Three Lives & Company, 154 W. 10th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Jan. 17 at 7: By Sasha Abramsky, from her work of nonfiction "Hard Time Blues: How Politics Built a Prison Nation." (The Corner Bookstore, Madison Ave. at 93rd St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Jan. 20 at 2: By Maureen Howard, from her novella about James Audubon, "Big as Life: Three Tales for Spring." (Wave Hill, 249th St. at Independence Ave., the Bronx. 718-549-3200.) ♦ Jan. 20 at 7: By the fiction writer Stephen Raleigh Byler, from his début novel, "Searching for Intruders," and by the novelist Paul LaFarge, from his book "Haussmann, or the Distinction." LaFarge will present a slide show with his reading. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

**TALKS**

Jan. 17 at 8:15: The author S. J. Rozan interviews the true-crime writer Ann Rule. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500.) ♦ Jan. 21 at 6: The comparative-literature professors Richard A. Macksey and John T. Irwin each discuss the works of Jorge Luis Borges. (Grolier Club, 47 E. 60th St. No tickets necessary.)

## MOVIES OPENING

**THE FAREWELL**
A drama about Bertolt Brecht set during a single late-summer day in 1956 when the playwright returned to Berlin with his entourage. Jan Schütte directed. In German. Opening Jan. 16. (Film Forum.)

**ITALIAN FOR BEGINNERS**
Lone Scherfig's Dogme '95 romantic comedy, in which six thirtysomethings enrolled in an Italian class find love during a Copenhagen winter. In Danish. Opening Jan. 18.

**THE PLASTIC PEOPLE OF THE UNIVERSE**
Jana Chytlová directed this documentary about the influential Czech rock band that formed in 1968, just after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Opening Jan. 18. (Pioneer.)

**SNOW DOGS**
An action comedy with Cuba Gooding, Jr., who plays a Miami dentist competing in the Iditarod. Opening Jan. 18.

**TIME OF FAVOR**
Writer-director Joseph Cedar's thriller about an Orthodox army officer (Aki Avni) who gets involved in a plan to blow up the Temple Mount. Opening Jan. 18. (Quad Cinema and Sutton 1 and 2.)

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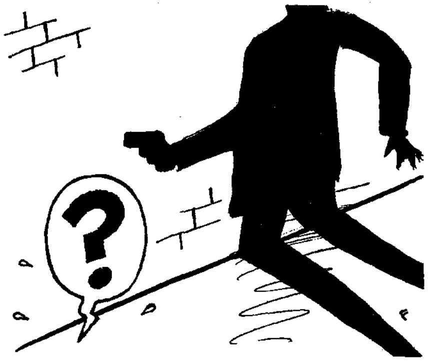
## FILM NOTES

**ALI**
Will Smith—muscled up, ears flattened, and with his features reshaped—gets the right Kentucky music in his voice in his impersonation of Muhammad Ali. He's also developed the slow-moving meditativeness of a big-bodied man, but he misses the spontaneity of the brazen young Ali, and nothing can match the speed of Ali's punch. This elaborate bio-pic, directed by Michael Mann, who wrote the script with Eric Roth, is beautifully made, but it lacks a fresh point of view or even successful dramatic shaping. Many of the actors, however, are superb, including Jamie Foxx, Jeffrey Wright, Giancarlo Esposito, and Mykelti Williamson as a young Don King.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 12/24 & 31/01.) (Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

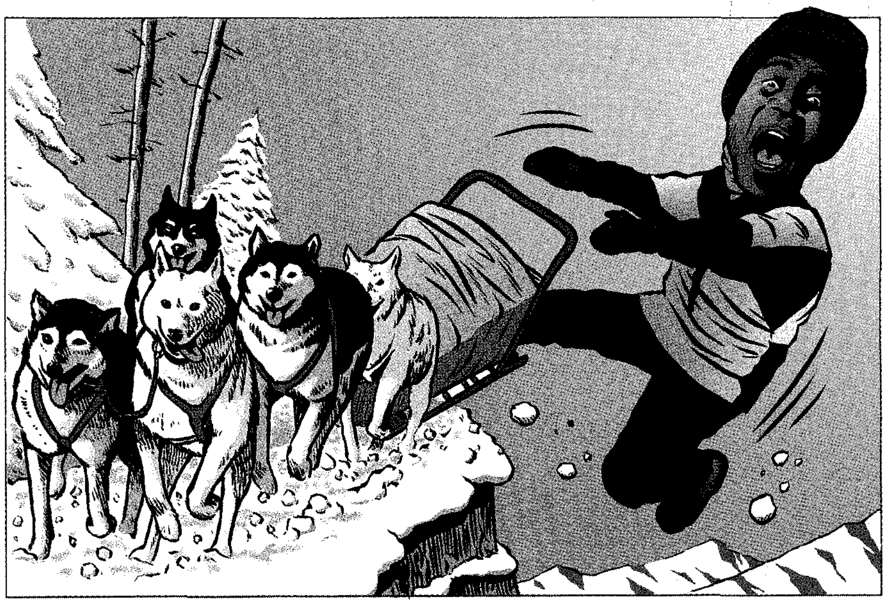
**AMÉLIE**
A waifish Parisienne discovers her mission in life: to bring unexpected happiness to others, and so to herself. Such is the story of Amélie (Audrey Tautou), and the simplicity of it appears to have touched a universal nerve. Tautou is clearly a find, although one wonders what Mathieu Kassovitz, who plays the object of her affection, made of his role; it was Kassovitz who, in 1995, yanked French cinema up to date with his baring of ethnic hostilities in "La Haine." The Paris of this movie lies at the other extreme, although what nags at you most is not the neighborly charm but the itchy, unsettled manner of the director, Jean-Pierre Jeunet. How far should we trust a plea for benevolence when it feels like a box of tricks? In French.—*Anthony Lane* (11/5/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Paris.)

**A BEAUTIFUL MIND**
If you think the title stinks, try the movie. Russell Crowe plays John Nash, a real-life mathematician whose most radical work was produced in his early twenties and who shared the 1994 Nobel Prize for Economics at the age of sixty-six. In between lay years of darkness, during which Nash was assailed by paranoid schizophrenia. When it comes to the delicate matter of his delusions, this earnest movie, written by Akiva Goldsman and directed by Ron Howard, pulls a flagrant scam: whole characters and episodes are presented as urgently authentic, only to be revealed as figments of a cracked imagination. Crowe pulls out the stops, but he looks too bullish and controlled for such a pitiable victim. On safer ground, Ed Harris lends his icy eyes to the role of a Cold War spymaster. The movie grinds on forever until it bumps into redemption; the best reason to stay with it is Jennifer Connelly, who smolders



and suffers to perfection as Nash's weary wife. Math skills not required.—*A.L.* (1/7/02) (Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

**BELLISSIMA**
It is said that this 1951 Luchino Visconti film was conceived when the director was looking for a child actress for a different production and found himself surrounded by four thousand mothers, each shouting "Mine is *bellissima*!" The film is a satirical view of the movie-studio world of Cinecittà, and is also perhaps Visconti's warmest comedy. It's full of contradictory impulses, and is marred by a too pat ending glorifying the wisdom of the common people, but at its center is the great Anna Magnani as a screen-struck mother, determined to make a star of her plain little five-year-old (Tina Apicella). Magnani enters the child in a contest to find "the prettiest child in Rome"; there is a devastating sequence when the mother, who has finagled her way into the screening room where her daughter's screen test is being run, is listening to the laughter—Magnani is at her most extraordinary. In Italian.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 17 and Jan. 19.)



*Opening January 18, Cuba Gooding, Jr., in "Snow Dogs."*

MARK ZINGARELLI

**BLACK HAWK DOWN**
This account of the ill-fated 1993 Special Forces action in Mogadishu, Somalia, which resulted in the death of eighteen Americans, is exceptionally violent but also truthful to the pain and disorder of battle. It's very clearly directed by Ridley Scott, who allows you to see where the different groups of men are fighting in relation to one another. The movie suggests that despite the casualties the battle was not a total failure but rather a demonstration of strength—the men were killed, in part, because they stayed in the danger zone to rescue survivors from the two helicopters that were shot down. With Sam Shepard, Tom Sizemore, and Josh Hartnett, all submerging themselves in the business at hand. Ken Nolan, adapting Mark Bowden's book, achieves the right tone of matter-of-factness, resolution, and defiance.—*D.D.* (12/24 & 31/01) (42nd Street E Walk, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

**BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF**
A genre-busting treat—part costume drama, part martial-arts horror film—concerning a ferocious, man-eating beast that roams the mountains of eighteenth-century France. The film, directed energetically by Christophe Gans, gets the jolts started with the gruesome death of a peasant girl, which is imaginatively taken from the opening scene of "Jaws." Gans casts his film with gorgeous performers (Samuel Le Bihan as the scientist sent to investigate, Monica Bellucci as a mysterious courtesan), and his eye-candy sets and thoroughly fruity ideas pack the film with enough outré juxtapositions to make Baz Luhrmann blush. In French.—*Bruce Diones* (84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

**THE BUSINESS OF STRANGERS**
A joyless, time-starved executive (Stockard Channing) spends an evening in the company of the underling (Julia Stiles) she just fired. They make up over too many drinks and then, for good measure, hatch a plan to humiliate a wolfish headhunter (Frederick Weller), thus righting the wrongs inflicted by corporate man. You can sense the setup of Patrick Stettner's first feature creaking beneath the weight of contrivance, but the two lead actresses breathe, or maybe slap, life into the whole conceit, and Channing offers a fine case study in frustration—a career's worth of rage, let loose for a single night.—*A.L.* (12/17/01) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**GOSFORD PARK**
An amazingly successful contrivance: this Agatha Christie-style houseparty murder mystery, set in 1932, plants itself deep into social reality and achieves the kind of candor about class and sex that Christie would never have been capable of. The idea came from Bob Balaban and Robert Altman; the brilliant screenplay was written by Julian Fellowes. Altman directs an enormous cast with lightness and speed and a masterly ability to pull the many little pieces of intrigue together into a coherent whole. Casually, the movie chronicles the end of the rigid British class system and the liberation of the working class through popular entertainment. The once-in-a-lifetime cast includes Michael Gambon, Kristin Scott Thomas, Maggie Smith, Jeremy Northam, and Charles Dance as the swells, and Helen Mirren, Eileen Atkins, Alan Bates, Clive Owen, and Emily Watson as the servants. Bob Balaban plays a Hollywood producer of Charlie Chan mysteries, and Ryan Phillippe is his valet, a cherub-

faced erotic toy that anyone can play with.—*D.D.* (1/14/02) (Chelsea West, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

### IN THE BEDROOM

In Camden, Maine, a twenty-one-year-old college student, Frank (Nick Stahl), is having a headlong summer affair with a local woman, Natalie (Marisa Tomei). Natalie is separated from her husband (William Mapother), the loutish scion of a prominent local family. When the husband kills his rival, Frank's hypercivilized parents (Tom Wilkinson and Sissy Spacek) begin to consider vengeance as a way of saving themselves from destroying each other. This Sophoclean tale, fleshed out from an elliptical short story by Andre Dubus, draws its strength from minute observation of settings and moods, and from a gradual tightening of the winch. Much of it is very quiet (the first-time director, Todd Field, is an actor and a photographer), but when it explodes, the violence actually means something.—*D.D.* (11/26/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea West, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 34th Street Theatre.)

### KANDAHAR

The latest film by the Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf couldn't be better timed. The story is just a series of gestures: Nafas (Nelofer Pazira), an Afghan woman who left her country as a teen-ager, returns to look for her suicidal sister. On the way to Kandahar (conceived as a state of mind as much as a place), she runs into a variety of helpers disguising themselves to avoid persecution by the Taliban—men in burkas, a boy faking an inability to read the Koran, a benevolent African-American wearing a false beard. The sequences don't have much continuity, but Makhmalbaf turns the desolation of the country into scenes of iconic power. In Farsi and English.—*D.D.* (12/10/01) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

### KATE & LEOPOLD

A time-travel romantic comedy starring Meg Ryan as a modern-day executive and Hugh Jackman as the nineteenth-century duke who leaps into her life. The director, James Mangold, imparts a low-key, easy-listening feel to the proceedings, but the movie's plotless machinations are numbingly routine, and both Jackman and Ryan seem a bit mature to be so silly in love.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 2, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

### LITTLE OTIK

The reclusive Czech animator Jan Svankmajer's latest fantastical film is based on an old folktale about an infertile couple who carve a baby out of a tree stump, only to watch in terror as it comes alive and begins to devour the neighbors. In Svankmajer's hands, the gnarly stop-motion animation of the child—with a tongue protruding from bark and razorlike twigs for hands—becomes a Giacometti-esque nightmare. Wisely, he sets his story in contemporary Prague and encourages earnest performances from his actors—a combination that creates a creepy fable about parental love and its sometime horrors. In Czech.—*B.D.* (The Screening Room.)

### THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

It takes about forty-five minutes for the movie to emerge from Sir Ian McKellen's beard (he plays the garrulous wizard Gandalf), but once it does, this enormous hunk of quasi-medieval myth, based on the work of J. R. R. Tolkien, is consistently beautiful and exciting. The New Zealander director Peter Jackson, who wrote the screenplay with Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens, works with enough dramatic tension and pictorial grandeur to sustain us through long periods of complicated exposition and heavy bouts of swordplay. Elijah Wood, of the troubled blue eyes, plays the hobbit Frodo. He is accompanied in this quest by Gandalf, two noble human warriors (Viggo Mortensen and Sean Bean), an intemperate, black-bearded dwarf (John Rhys-Davies), and various scampering halflings. The New Zealand landscapes—jagged mountains, thickety glens, limitless plains—add to the aura of enchantment.—*D.D.* (12/24 & 31/01) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 1, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia I and II, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

### MONSTER'S BALL

Marc Forster's movie delivers an unworkable paradox: the characters are inarticulate, damaged people who have led heedless and tragic lives—portrayed with bitter realism—and yet the plotting is sheer Hollywood in its schemes and coincidences. Billy Bob Thornton is the Georgia corrections officer who conducts the execution of the husband (Sean "Puffy" Combs) of a local waitress (Halle Berry) and then falls in love with the widow. The slow, reticent dramaturgy has its moments of authenticity, especially in the balanced interracial romance: Thornton is quiet and affecting and Berry acts up a storm. Written by Milo Addica and Will Rokos.—*D.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 72nd Street East, and Sunshine Cinema.)

### MULHOLLAND DRIVE

A woman wanders away from a car wreck and into a strange house. Little old people scurry under the foot of a door, squeaking like mice. Yes, it's a David Lynch project. This one began life as a TV pilot; you can just imagine the aghast faces of the network executives as they saw what they had commissioned. The completed elongated weirdness, stretching to two and a half hours, feels discomfortingly at home on the larger screen; if you ever wanted to see an epic horror-soap, this is what it would look like. Many established Lynch motifs are in place, most of them summoned from one corner or another of the nineteen-fifties: the innocent blonde (Naomi Watts), the baffled brunette (Laura Elena Harring), the clueless cop (Robert Forster). Addicts of the director will tie themselves in knots trying to pick the lock of the film; the rest of us can lie back and enjoy the spooking.—*A.L.* (10/15/01) (Cinema Village, Empire 25, and 59th Street East Cinema.)

### NEVER GIVE A SUCKER AN EVEN BREAK

W. C. Fields in his prime. Like "The Bank Dick," from the year before, this 1941 picture deals with making a movie. The movie Fields wants to make is set in a Ruritania in the clouds, an example of American surrealism—comic-strip foolishness and then some. Up there, he encounters the great-bosomed comic divinity, Margaret Dumont. The film has also its horror: an erstwhile ingenue named Gloria Jean. You can't just shut your eyes, because she *sings*.—*P.K.* (Moving Image; Jan. 20.)

### NO MAN'S LAND

During the Bosnian war, Ciki (Branko Djuric), a Bosnian, and Nino (Rene Bitorajac), a Serb, two very similar men forced to be enemies, get stuck in a trench together between enemy lines. Another soldier is lying nearby on a spring-loaded grenade that will explode—killing everyone—if he moves. The U.N. peacekeepers who arrive on the scene are pompous and ineffective, and the journalists grasping and opportunistic. The writer-director Danis Tanovic has nothing original or even interesting on his mind, but he's made the kind of absurdist war parable which always wins awards and garners good reviews. In Bosnian.—*D.D.* (First & 62nd Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas.)

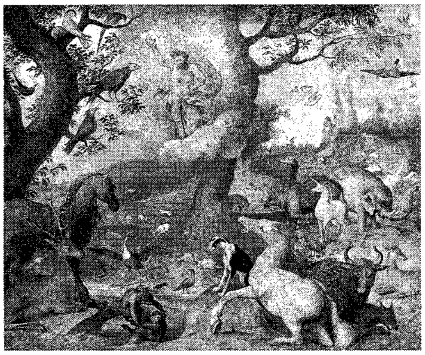
### OCEAN'S ELEVEN

Steven Soderbergh's remake of the 1960 Vegas heist movie bristles with energy. Instead of the ineffably casual Rat Pack, Soderbergh has a cast of hardworking guys: George Clooney in the old Frank Sinatra role as the criminal mastermind, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Don Cheadle, Andy Garcia, and, in colorful support, Elliott Gould and Carl Reiner. Soderbergh constructs the movie in layers with lines of terse dialogue winging on and off the screen and fitting perfectly together. The robbery itself also depends on many interlocking pieces of theatre—moments of imposture and fakery which allow the gang members to breach the inner sanctum of the casinos. Despite all the cleverness and good humor, however, the movie peters out, and, by the end, you may wonder what it's all for.—*D.D.* (12/10/01) (84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

### ORANGE COUNTY

Mike White and Jake Kasdan, two of the talents who gave us the achingly nerdy television series "Freaks & Geeks," churn out a power-pop teen

SWANN
AUCTIONS



Circle of Jan Bruegel the elder, **God the Father Creating the Animals**, bodycolor on vellum. **At auction Jan 31.**

*Thur Jan 31* **Old Master Drawings**
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*Illustrated Catalogue:* **$35**

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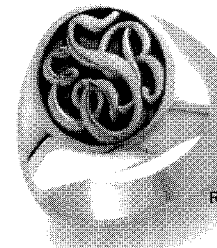

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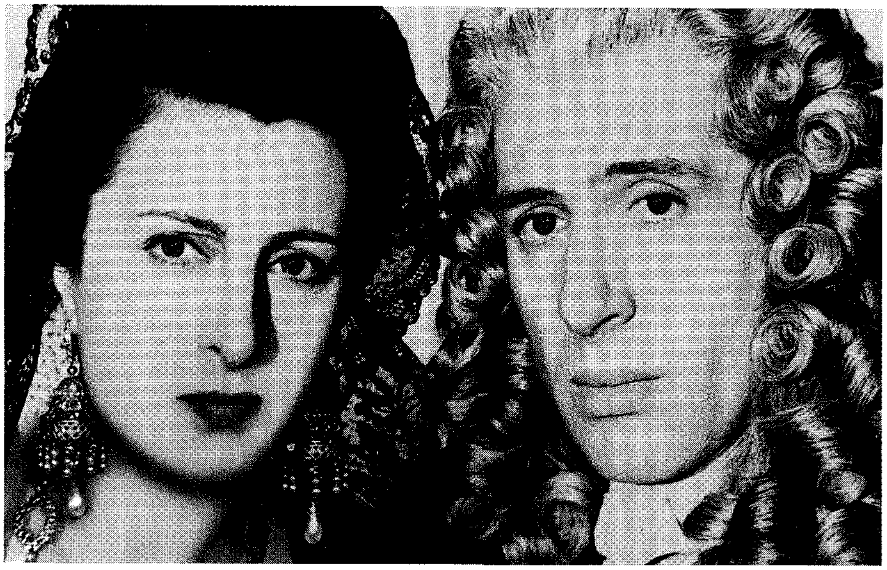

MAMMA MAGNANI *In the Italian cinema's postwar pantheon—Mastroianni the fretful seducer, Loren the street siren, Masina the eternal waif—Anna Magnani was the volatile, earthy Everywoman. Starting January 17,* MOMA *pays tribute to Magnani in films by, among others, Visconti, Pasolini, De Sica, and Rossellini. Renoir famously called her the best actress he had ever worked with after filming "The Golden Coach" (1952), in which she plays the star of an eighteenth-century commedia-dell'arte troupe who juggles affairs with a toreador, an actor, and a viceroy played by Duncan Lamont (above) with an exuberance that gives new meaning to the word "gusto."*

comedy for MTV Productions. The movie is loaded with cameos, the best of which is Lily Tomlin as a memory-impaired guidance counselor. When one of her lapses prevents the affable senior-class president (Colin Hanks), from gaining acceptance to Stanford, he decides to argue his case in person, enlisting the help of his crunchy girlfriend (Schuyler Fisk) and his sweaty armpit of a brother (Jack Black). Black, a volcanic pudgeball, spends most of his screen time snapping wisecracks in his tighty whities; needless to say, he's the funniest thing on display. In the movie's mellower moments, it slips in some clever jokes about the writing life and more than a few homoerotic asides (is football practice anything else?). Kasdan and White are clearly having a lot of fun imagining Orange County as a land of the hopelessly vapid: who wouldn't want to attend a high school where the teacher says "Juliet?" and the students respond: "Claire Danes."—*Michael Agger* (First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and 34th Street Theatre.)

**ROME, OPEN CITY**

Roberto Rossellini burst upon the world with this 1945 film, made just after the Allies took Rome. The fame of his brutal, melodramatic account of the underground resistance to the Nazi occupation rests on its extraordinary immediacy and its rough, documentary look. Many Americans, used to slick war films, reacted to it as if it actually were caught, documentary footage, and mistook the great Anna Magnani and Aldo Fabrizi, Maria Michi, and the other actors for nonprofessionals—this despite such stock elements as a rapacious lesbian Gestapo agent and a Hollywood-and-Vine-type Gestapo chief. The plot devices are often opportunistic, but there's a unifying fervor: shot on odds and ends of film stock, with fluctuating electricity, and showing people who a few weeks before had been part of the events, the movie gave us a cross-section of a city under terrible stress. When the initial $25,000 that Rossellini had raised was used up, he and Magnani sold their clothes. In Italian.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 18 and Jan. 20.)

**THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS**

After the brilliance of "Rushmore," his levelheaded look at the gifts of a misfit, where could Wes Anderson go next? In the event, he has broadened his scope to take in an entire family of misfits: the Tenenbaums, residing in their colorful town house like kooky modern leftovers from the age of Edith Wharton—an age of innocence indeed, despite the ill will that gusts around. The parents (Gene Hackman and Anjelica Huston) raised three overachieving children (Ben Stiller, Luke Wilson, and Gwyneth Paltrow) and then separated. We are here for the aftermath: the daughter's fading marriage to a bearded melancholic (Bill Murray), and other sunderings and patchings-up. The movie is packed tight with strong, if baffled, feelings, and yet we could be watching it through glass; Anderson specializes in the cool, astringent gaze, and for anyone sick of Hollywood heart-melters this could be the antidote.—*A.L.* (12/17/01) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

**VANILLA SKY**

This Hollywood remake of the 1997 Spanish movie "Abre los Ojos" can only be called *un desastre*. Tom Cruise plays a magazine-empire heir who lives in the Dakota and works (apparently) in the Condé Nast building—he's a playboy publisher splitting his time between Cameron Diaz and Penélope Cruz. There is an accident, and Cruise winds up charged with murder and disfigured (he sometimes shouts through a plastic mask). The movie jumps in and out of dreams and nightmares, rushes forward and backward, and the only thing that emerges clearly is that a big star is coming to terms with the rare anxiety of losing his looks. It's one of those rare movies that manage to be overwrought and completely boring. Cameron Crowe, who wrote and directed it, has to begin all over again and figure out why he wanted to be a movie director.—*D.D.* (84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

## ALSO PLAYING

**CHARLOTTE GRAY**
Angelika Film Center, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Square.

**CODE UNKNOWN** (12/3/01)
Quad Cinema.

**DONNIE DARKO**
Pioneer.

**GHOST WORLD** (8/6/01)
Murray Hill Cinemas, Quad Cinema, and The Screening Room.

**IRIS**
Angelika Film Center, Cinema 3, and Lincoln Square.

**THE MAJESTIC**
East 85th Street, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.

**THE SHIPPING NEWS**
BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.

**WHAT TIME IS IT THERE?**
Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

## THEATRE ADDRESSES

*Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.*

**Angelika Film Center,** 18 W. Houston St.
**Astor Plaza,** 44th St. at Broadway.
**BAM Rose Cinemas,** 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
**Beekman,** Second Ave. at 66th St.
**Chelsea Cinemas,** 260 W. 23rd St.
**Chelsea West,** 333 W. 23rd St.
**Cinemas 1, 2, and 3,** Third Ave. at 60th St.
**Cinema Village,** 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
**East 85th Street,** First Ave. at 85th St.
**East 86th Street Cinemas,** Third Ave. at 86th St.
**84th Street Sixplex,** Broadway at 84th St.
**Empire 25,** on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
**59th Street East Cinema,** 239 E. 59th St.
**Film Forum,** W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
**First & 62nd Cinemas,** 400 E. 62nd St.
**42nd Street E Walk,** 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
**Kips Bay Theatre,** Second Ave. at 32nd St.
**Lincoln Plaza Cinemas,** Broadway at 63rd St.
**Lincoln Square,** Broadway at 68th St.
**Metro Twin,** Broadway at 99th St.
**Murray Hill Cinemas,** 160 E. 34th St.
**New York Twin,** Second Ave. at 67th St.
**19th Street East 6,** Broadway at 19th St.
**Olympia I and II,** Broadway at 107th St.
**Orpheum VII,** Third Ave. at 86th St.
**Paris,** 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
**Park & 86th Street Cinemas,** 125 E. 86th St.
**Pioneer,** 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
**Quad Cinema,** 34 W. 13th St.
**The Screening Room,** 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
**72nd Street East,** Third Ave. at 71st St.
**64th and 2nd,** Second Ave. at 64th St.
**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd St.
**State,** Broadway at 45th St.
**Sunshine Cinema,** 139-143 E. Houston St.
**Sutton 1 and 2,** Third Ave. at 57th St.
**34th Street Theatre,** 312 W. 34th St.
**Union Square,** Broadway at 13th St.
**Village East Cinemas,** Second Ave. at 12th St.
**Village Theatre VII,** Third Ave. at 11th St.
**Walter Reade Theatre,** Lincoln Center (875-5600).
**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th St.

## REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

*Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.*

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE**
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Jan. 20: A W. C. Fields retrospective. Jan. 19 at 2: "You Can't Cheat an Honest Man"

PHOTOFEST

(1939, George Marshall). ♦ Jan. 19 at 4: "My Little Chickadee" (1940, Eddie Cline). ♦ Jan. 20 at 2: "The Bank Dick" (1940, Cline). ♦ Jan. 20 at 4: "Never Give a Sucker an Even Break" (†). ♦ Repertory nights. Jan. 19-20 at 6:30: "L'Avventura" (1960, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian).

**ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES**
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Jan. 16-17 at 6:30 and 9:30; Jan. 18 at 7 and 10; and Jan. 19-20 at 3:30, 6:30, and 9:30: "Werckmeister Harmonies" (2000, Béla Tarr; in Hungarian). ♦ Jan. 17 at 7:30: "The Flowers of St. Francis" (1949, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian). ♦ Jan. 18 at 6 and 9:30 and Jan. 19-20 at 2, 5:30, and 9: "Ulysses' Gaze" (1995, Theo Angelopoulos; in Greek).

**FILM FORUM**
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Feb. 7: "Greatest Hits." Jan. 16-17 at 3:10 and 7:45: "Once Upon a Time in China I" (1991, Tsui Hark; in Cantonese). ♦ Jan. 16-17 at 1, 5:35, and 10:10: "Once Upon a Time in China II" (1992, Hark; in Cantonese). ♦ Jan. 18-20 at 1:40, 5:40, and 9:45: "Rififi" (1955, Jules Dassin; in French). ♦ Jan. 18-20 at 3:45 and 7:50: "Bob Le Flambeur" (1955, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French). ♦ Jan. 21 at 1:10, 4:45, and 8:20: "Persona" (1966, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). ♦ Jan. 21 at 2:50, 6:25, and 10: "Performance" (1970, Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg). ♦ Jan. 22 at 3, 6:30, and 10: "Billy Liar" (1963, John Schlesinger). ♦ Jan. 22 at 1:20, 4:50, and 8:20: "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning" (1960, Karel Reisz).

**FLORENCE GOULD HALL**
55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Films that portray *la vie d'artiste*. Jan. 22 at 12:30 and 6:30: "Children of Paradise" (1943, Michael Carné; in French).

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through Jan. 31: A tribute to the Italian actress Anna Magnani. Unless otherwise noted, all films are in Italian. Jan. 17 at 2:30 and Jan. 19 at 2: "Bellissima" (†). ♦ Jan. 17 at 6: "Mamma Roma" (1962, Pier Paolo Pasolini). ♦ Jan. 18 at 2:30 and Jan. 21 at 5: "The Golden Coach" (1952, Jean Renoir; in English). ♦ Jan. 18 at 6 and Jan. 21 at 2:30: "The Miracle" (1948, Roberto Rossellini) and "The Human Voice" (1948, Rossellini). ♦ Jan. 18 at 8 and Jan. 20 at 2: "Rome, Open City" (†). ♦ Jan. 19 at 5: "Hell in the City/The Wild, Wild Women" (1958, Renato Castellani). ♦ Jan. 20 at 5 and Jan. 22 at 2:30: "Doctor Beware" (1941, Vittorio De Sica). ♦ Jan. 22 at 6: "The Rose Tattoo" (1955, Daniel Mann; in English).

**WALTER READE THEATRE**
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Jan. 24: The Eleventh Annual New York Jewish Film Festival. Jan. 16 at 1: "Conspiracy" (2001, Frank Pierson). ♦ Jan. 16 at 3:15 and 8:45: "The Travellers: This Land Is Your Land" (2001, Robert Cohen). ♦ Jan. 16 at 6:15: "Pacha Mama" (2001, Asaffa Peled; in Hebrew) and "Thank God for India" (2000, Nisan Katz; in Hebrew). ♦ Jan. 17 at 1 and Jan. 20 at 8:30: "Gripsholm" (2000, Xavier Koller; in German and Swedish). ♦ Jan. 17 at 3:15, Jan. 19 at 7, and Jan. 20 at 6:15: "Keep Away from the Window" (2000, Jan Jakub Kolski; in Polish). ♦ Jan. 17 at 6:15: "Zygielbojm's Death" (2001, Dzamila Ankiewica; in Polish). ♦ Jan. 17 at 8:30 and Jan. 19 at 9:30: "Waiting for the Messiah" (1999, Daniel Burman; in Spanish). ♦ Jan. 20 at 2 and Jan. 21 at 3:15: "Last Dance" (2001, Mirra Bank). ♦ Jan. 20 at 4:15, Jan. 21 at 8:30, and Jan. 22 at 1: "Brownsville Black and White" (2000, Richard Broadman). ♦ Jan. 21 at 1 and 6:15: "Strange Fruit" (2001, Joel Katz). ♦ Jan. 22 at 3:15 and 8:30: "Divan" (2001, Pearl Gluck). ♦ Jan. 22 at 6:15: "The Optimists" (2000, Jacky and Lisa Comforty). ♦ Jan. 22 at 6:15: "They Came to Pick Me Up" (2001, Ilana Navaro; in French). ♦ Dance on Camera Festival. Jan. 18 at 1: "Narratives." ♦ Jan. 18 at 4: "Dance Personalities." ♦ Jan. 18 at 7: "Dramatic Focus." ♦ Jan. 18 at 9:15: "The Stars and the Ensemble." ♦ Jan. 19 at 1: "Pioneers in New Media." ♦ Jan. 19 at 4: "Nijinsky."

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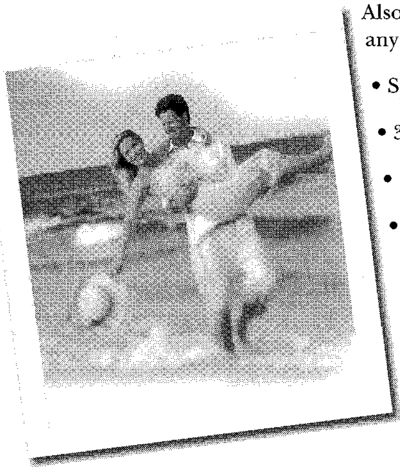

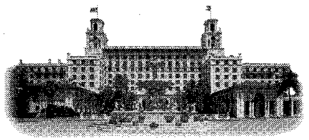

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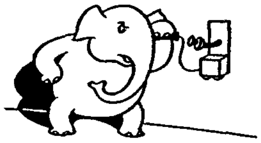
THE
NEW YORKER

# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## COMMENT
## DAKOTA DEMON



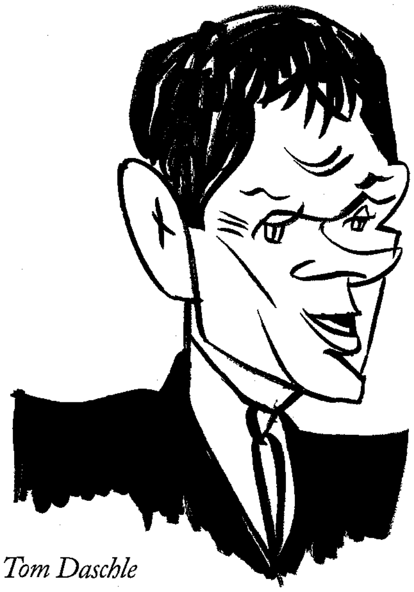
It would be nice if President Bush had meant what he said the other day when he told a cheering audience in California, "Not over my dead body will they raise your taxes!" That is, it would be nice if he had meant that he does *not* regard the unlikely prospect of an increase in the taxes paid by the rich as an appropriate cause for which to lay down his life. Alas, there is every indication that, far from meaning what he said, he merely meant what he meant.

The "they" Bush was vowing to stop by making the ultimate sacrifice is actually a "he": Tom Daschle, the Senate Majority Leader. Or, rather, a straw man by that name. In a speech the day before, Daschle had hypothesized a connection between the abrupt disappearance of projected federal budget surpluses and the dramatic reductions in taxes on high incomes and big estates which, under the Bush plan enacted seven months ago, are scheduled to kick in over the course of the next decade. The logic of Daschle's argument is that these reductions ought themselves to be reduced, but there is a pretty obvious difference between raising taxes and moderating the amount by which they are to be cut. Actually, Daschle is calling for tax cuts, too, only the cuts he wants would favor business investment and people of low to moderate means, who need the money and would be likely to spend it.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

According to both the Washington *Post* and the Washington *Times*, the current phase of the campaign to turn Daschle into Satan was ordered by the President himself, shortly after Thanksgiving. That campaign had been going on intermittently since last May, when Vermont's Jim Jeffords quit the Republican Party to become an Independent, thereby giving the Democrats a hairbreadth 50-49-1 margin in the Senate. There was a lull after September 11th, when the Senate, under Daschle's leadership, briskly passed bills granting the government expanded antiterrorism powers and resources. But when the Democrats declined to go along with an Administration proposal to give new tax breaks to rich individuals and corporations in the guise of stimulating the faltering economy, the demonize-Daschle campaign was revived, this time in coördinated earnest. In December, Frank Luntz, the pollster who helped guide Newt Gingrich to glory in 1994, circulated a memo explaining, in urgent italics, that

> *it is time for someone, everyone, to start using the phrase "Daschle Democrats" and the word "obstructionist" in the same sentence. It's time for Congressional Republicans to personalize the individual that is standing directly in the way of economic security, energy security, and even national security.* Remember what the Democrats did to Gingrich? We need to do exactly the same thing to Daschle.



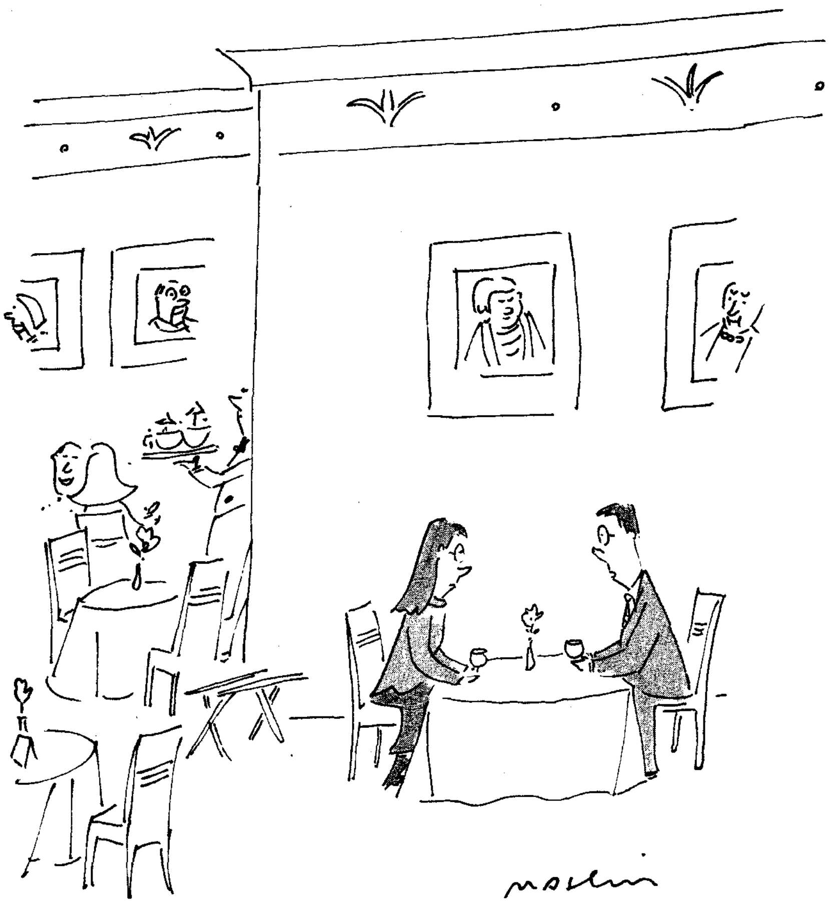
*Tom Daschle*

Sure enough, Vice-President Cheney and leading Republicans dutifully went on television to utter sentences containing the recommended word combinations. The conservative press wheeled in tight formation. ("DASCHLE'S OBSTRUCTIONISM" a Washington *Times* editorial was headlined.) Auxiliaries, meanwhile, were already on the ground. Four right-wing lobbying organizations have lately conducted advertising campaigns against Daschle in his home state of South Dakota; one ad, sponsored by the Family Research Council on behalf of oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, featured side-by-side mug shots of Daschle and Saddam Hussein. A fifth group, an association of wealthy supply-siders called the Club for Growth, has announced plans to spend up to half a million dollars this year on local spots denouncing Daschle. Advertising rates being what they are in tumbleweed territory, that kind of money will buy a lot of airtime.

Daschle provides unpromising materials out of which to construct a villain. Unlike Gingrich, he is calm, modest, and unfailingly polite. His personal life and public career have been dry holes for scandal wildcatters. It's true that he occupies the seat once held by George McGovern, and that he was a volunteer in McGovern's 1972 Presidential campaign. But the charge of "McGovernism" no longer has the oomph of old. These days, thanks to the recklessly prolific popular historian Stephen Ambrose, McGovern belatedly basks in the glow of his "greatest generation" heroism as a bomber pilot. Daschle is an ex-Air Force officer, too, and, as the most prominent Washington addressee of an anthrax mailing, he holds a kind of honorary Purple Heart in the war on terrorism. A target-rich environment he is not.

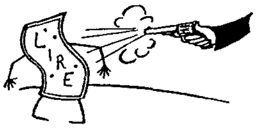
In a way, the roughing up of Daschle is reassuring, because it signifies that normal democratic politics has not been abolished. The antiterrorism battle requires, if not monolithic "unity," strong working consensus, and that is what Bush has earned for it. But the President has no automatic right to get his way in such matters as fiscal, energy, and environmental policy. Republicans have lately faulted Daschle for exploiting the Senate's unlimited-debate rule, which they describe, correctly, as undemocratic. This is pretty rich, given how promiscuously they themselves exploited it to thwart President Clinton. But, under our peculiar congeries of political institutions, democracy—or, at least, majority rule—is a matter of approximation. If an election were held today, Bush would win easily. On the other hand, the last actual election showed a clear majority of the public favoring policies less conservative than his. The Senate, of course, is an inherently "undemocratic" body, in which (say) South Dakota's three-quarters of a million people swing as much weight as (say) Texas's twenty-one million. On the other hand, the states represented by the Daschle Democrats add up to a much bigger slice of the population than those of the Lott Republicans. As we have learned, it's all in the counting. Daschle isn't "obstructing." He's just doing his job.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*



*"I would've told you all this yesterday, but I just made it up today."*

## TREASURY DEPT.
## EMBRACING THE EURO



The Italians say "e-ur-o." The Germans say "oi-ro." The Spanish haven't decided what to say, except that the "o" is loud. The French say something unpronounceable that involves turning your mouth into a small hole, about the size of a euro coin. And the Brits, who don't have to say anything, stare pointedly at their pound notes, which no one who is using euros can afford anyway. Two weeks and twelve countries into European monetary union, the economy of Western Europe hangs on a rush on pocket calculators and little plastic cards that grade vintages on one side and, on the other, change with the light to tell you how much you're really spending on the wine you've bought. Shops and restaurants in Berlin had been printing their prices in Deutsche marks and euros—marks first, euros in parentheses—long before the January 1st conversion deadline, and a few of them weathered a Christmas slump by reversing the order and thus doubling their profits on all but the most attentive clients. Restaurants in Paris doubled *their* profits simply because a hundred-euro dinner was bound to look more appetizing to more people than the same dinner at nearly seven hundred francs. Restaurants in Rome celebrated the happy coincidence of January 1st and the white-truffle season, white truffles being definitely more appetizing at forty euros than at eighty thousand lire for a small sprinkling on your pasta.

Businessmen made a bundle on the confusion, although Italians had expected to be so confused—you could say so exponentially confused, since they'd lost more zeros to the conversion than any other country—that Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's Prime Minister and a billionaire in any currency, mailed a little pocket converter to every family on the country's tax rolls. Each *piccolo omaggio* came with a signed eulogy to "our old and beloved lira" and an admonition to get on with it as Europeans, "at no charge." (This was quite a concession from the man who last month tried to block the placement of an E.U. food agency in Finland on the ground that "the Finns don't even know what prosciutto is.") The Prime Minister, as everyone who reads the paper (or can find a television channel that he doesn't own or control) knows, has had a certain amount of experience juggling zeros, given the number of indictments against him for financial fraud. But, while Italians are proud of, if incredulous at, finding themselves in the currency company of flinty Frenchmen and rich Germans, there are signs that they are beginning to regret their old, extravagant, outsized paper money, their pockets full of weighty if worthless coins, their salaries in lire, which made every Italian a millionaire. It is one thing to be able to plunk down eighty cents (Italians say "centesimo," French "centime," and Germans "cent," but there are undeniably a hundred of them to a euro) for your cappuccino; it's another to be able to hand the bartender two thousand of anything for a cup of coffee and say, "Keep the change." For years, the French referred to anything truly pricey—a nice castle, a designer gown—in *anciens francs*, or, you could say, the equivalent of a hundred times the "new" francs they had really paid. The Italians, in two weeks, have taken up the practice, too. A tumbledown castle in Italy still costs a couple of billion lire, if you ask the buyer who wants to impress his girlfriend in Milan. He will even admit that big numbers make him feel better, and, in fact, they probably make everyone feel better, except for the occasional Mafia bagman who is now travelling lighter by approximately two thousand to one.

As for the money itself, from any Italian, *belle arti* perspective, it's pallid. The bills look as if twelve irritable bureaucrats had sat down to decide what pictures to put on them (no one even dreamed of suggesting a face) and, after years of vetoing one another's art and monuments, had asked the European Union computer to tell them what, if anything, was left. (What was left was aqueducts, viaducts, and bridges, as in bridges uniting people.)

There was, of course, some compromise, since if you were a European you had to believe that monetary union was a good thing, and that the people who said no to it—the Swedes and the Danes, along with the Brits—would be eating their own money in no time. In the end, each of the euro countries got to design its own coins—well, the backs of the coins—and the good news, if you're Italian, is that yours is by far the handsomest euro coin in circulation: Leonardo's Vitruvian Man. Which, of course, is a way of saying that one Italian euro is worth a hundred billion lire.

—*Jane Kramer*

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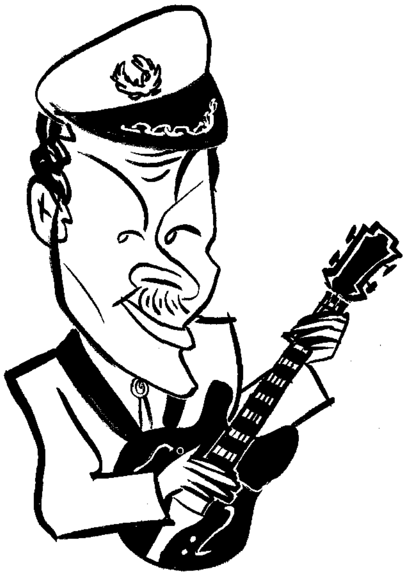
## POSTCARD FROM ST. LOUIS
## SWEET LITTLE SEVENTY-FIVE

It was not precisely a secret that Chuck Berry spent much of last spring in a place called the Four Seasons studio, not far from the airport in St. Louis, his home town. But few people besides family members and friends were aware that he was recording his first studio album in almost twenty-five years, or that the album, which will be released in early summer, will include a dozen new songs.

One day not long ago, Berry took a break from recording and drove from the Interbelt industrial park, where the studio is situated, to a nearby Wendy's. He drives a silver Toyota Avalon XL, with a string of purple Mardi Gras beads swaying from the rearview mirror. He wore a bolo tie with a black silk casino jacket and his trademark sailor's cap. "It keeps the sun out of my eyes," he said. "Baseball caps are better, but Chuck Berry is no hip-hop salesman."

Berry, who is seventy-five, lives in a stone manor house in Ladue, a suburb inhabited mainly by Monsanto and Anheuser-Busch executives. He stays in shape by lifting bricks, mowing the lawn, and working in his carpenter's shed. Once a month, he performs in the basement of Blueberry Hill, a music venue near Washington University that is owned by his friend Joe Edwards, and he still follows the St. Louis Cardinals. It's a low-key sort of life for a publicly angry man who spent three years in reform school after an armed-robbery conviction in his teens, and who, in his thirties, served twenty months for violating the Mann Act.

When he arrived at Wendy's, two young fans approached, carrying yellow napkins to be autographed. Berry obliges autograph seekers, who are mostly white college kids; he usually draws a smiley face next to his signature. At the counter, he asked for a double cheeseburger, chili, fries, and a Frosty. "France has the worst restaurants of all," he said. "They have scrawny chickens in their windows and serve horrible onion soup that tastes like dishwater. And then the European press has the nerve to say I'm difficult. Man, there is nothing funny about being hungry in a foreign land and reporters asking you dumb questions about your hits. Of course you're going to snap. Do you know what I miss over there? Chili, steaks, pork, oatmeal, buttermilk, and good hamburgers. My dad used to grow vegetables when I was young: cucumbers, squash, tomatoes—you name it. The vegetables in Europe don't compare."



*Chuck Berry*

He brought the food in a bag back to the studio, and as he ate he talked about the new album. A song entitled "Big Boys" seems likeliest to get radio play, and might well become the vehicle for Berry's first music video. Like many of his songs, "Big Boys" takes issue with pecking orders, reminding us that today's teen nerd may someday be the guy who signs our checks. "I was participating in the Las Vegas life style when I wrote it, and thinking about winners and losers, how John Gotti's power went up and down," Berry recalled. "But, basically, I wrote the song for commercial purposes, to make money."

He appears to worry more about money than about his legacy. After lunch, he took a call from his longtime agent, Dick Alen. "Tomorrow night in

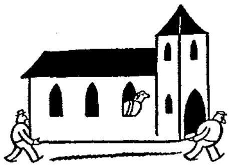
Seattle?" Berry asked. "For how much?" He liked the figure quoted. "Book it and get me a morning flight." Jerry Lee Lewis had become ill and Berry had been asked to replace him. Berry has always been enterprising about playing to a broad audience. He learned a long time ago that just mentioning a city like Albuquerque or Birmingham or Houston in a song guaranteed the song relentless radio airplay in that city. Berry performs approximately eighty shows a year, and it distresses him that audiences want to hear only oldies.

Berry is a devotee of the digital age, and he's keeping a journal on his computer. He is infatuated with aromas and maintains a tally of them in his journal. For example: "The scent of burning oak leaves in October in Missouri; an oncoming breeze laden with the smell of mint plants; a Chinese restaurant while waiting in line for a table; a passing pipe smoker using rum-and-maple tobacco; the uncontaminated breasts of a female companion; the brewing of coffee in the winter; the interior of a new automobile I just purchased; and, although I detest the smell of liquor, somehow I'm carried asunder by the surprise of liquor on the breath of a strange lady."

This side of him is evident in "Darlin'," the most introspective song on the new record. It's a country-tinged ballad to his daughter Ingrid that begins, "Darlin', your father's growing older, I fear; strains of gray are showing bolder each year. Lay your head upon my shoulder, my dear: Time is fading fast away." He goes on to sing of death and tells how tired he's grown of playing his ancient hits and doing his trademark duckwalk for the pleasure of baby boomers. In record stores, his CDs are always in the "Vintage" section. "It's an insult," Berry said. "But this new album should help me bust out of that ghetto."

—*Douglas Brinkley*

## THE WRECKING BALL
## THE LITTLE PAVILION THAT COULD



Given how much architecture was destroyed in lower Manhattan on September 11th, you might think that the last thing anybody would want to do now is to get rid of more of it, especially if the building in question is one of Battery Park City's most admired, if tiniest, gems. But that is exactly what the Museum of Jewish Heritage is planning to do with an elegant glass entry pavilion that it erected in 1997. The pavilion, a pair of trapezoids, was an afterthought, designed in enormous haste when museum officials decided, just before their new building opened, that its design, a granite hexagon by the architect Kevin Roche, didn't include enough room for ticket sales and security screening of visitors and packages. The only solution was a small, separate entry structure. The museum turned to Claire Weisz and Mark Yoes, a young husband-and-wife team of architects who had previously designed a prototype security kiosk for Battery Park City.

"The museum people came to us because they said they wanted someone who knew about security booths," Claire Weisz said last week as she walked through her building for what may have been the last time. Weisz and Yoes gave the museum rather more than it expected. They produced a crisp, sharply angled structure with a glass roof and glass-and-metal walls that seemed exhilarating amid the earnest and dutiful brick and stone buildings of Battery Park City. Weisz and Yoes managed to get it designed, approved by the Battery Park City Authority and city officials, and fully constructed, in just eight weeks. "We made it out of any materials we could order and have delivered fast," Weisz said.

The building, which was known as the visitors center, was never meant to overshadow the museum. But Roche's granite structure turned out to have such functional limitations that the visitors center was soon being used for office space. The little glass pavilion wasn't in most guidebooks, but in time it became the part of the museum complex that architects, especially younger ones, talked about. In a city with few strong modern public buildings, it was a kind of minor, underground icon. In the immediate aftermath of September 11th, when the museum was closed, the visitors center was taken over by the Police Department, which used it to store gas masks.

Before the terrorist attacks, the museum had decided to expand, and it had gone back to Roche and asked him to produce a design for the expansion. He proposed a big, swooping form of glass and granite that would sit like a backdrop behind the museum. The little glass visitors center would no longer be needed, and museum officials decided to place Roche's addition right where the visitors center now stands.

Excavation on the new addition began in late December, and by last week the visitors center had been closed. As a young architect, Claire Weisz has not had many buildings built, let alone demolished, and she finds it strange that her visitors center might disappear after just four years.

But, then again, it might not. The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, which owns the visitors center, told the Museum of Jewish Heritage last week that it did not want to see the building demolished, not only because of its architectural merit but also because, technically, it has not yet been fully paid for. "The bonds that financed it are still being paid off, and its useful life has not run out," Susan Chin, an assistant commissioner at the Department of Cultural Affairs, said. According to Chin, the city wants the building to be dismantled and moved elsewhere. "We're hoping that Battery Park City will use it, but we're just trying to find a new home," she said. "It's such a specialized building. Do you know any nonprofits that want a very well-designed little glass building?"

There has been talk of turning it into a field house and office for the Battery Park City ballfields, which are close to Ground Zero and have been occupied by cars and trucks since September 11th, or of using it as a temporary headquarters for a proposed world-hunger research center in Battery Park City. Either option would please Claire Weisz, who says the most important thing for her is that the pavilion be preserved for some sort of public use. "We don't build enough things in the city that can be occupied in a variety of ways," she said.

Throughout the process, Weisz has never met Kevin Roche, or even spoken to him. "I always felt that this was a kind of David-and-Goliath story," she said. "I understand that the museum people presented the design to him just to be sure that he was not appalled by it. And I guess he wasn't, because they built it."

—*Paul Goldberger*

### THE FINANCIAL PAGE

## RIGHTING COPYWRONGS

Three years ago, the Walt Disney Company pulled off a nifty legal heist. Disney's copyright on Mickey Mouse—who made his screen début in "Steamboat Willie," in 1928—was due to expire in 2003. The rights to Pluto, Goofy, and Donald Duck were to expire a few years later. This spelled trouble. But, after some aggressive lobbying and well-targeted campaign contributions from Disney and others, the threat was quashed: Congress quietly passed the so-called Sonny Bono Act, which extended all copyrights for twenty more years and kept Mickey out of the public domain.

At the time, Lawrence Lessig was a law professor at Harvard, where he'd earned a reputation as the most important thinker on intellectual property in the Internet era. Lessig was so outraged by the Bono Act that he helped orchestrate a lawsuit—ultimately unsuccessful—challenging its constitutionality. Now Lessig has published a book, "The Future of Ideas," which serves as a bleak summa of his thoughts on intellectual property. For Lessig (who's now at Stanford), the Bono Act was not just another instance of fat-cat favoritism but part of a disastrous trend toward what might be called property-rights fundamentalism. In his view, this trend is threatening to destroy the Internet and plunge us into a cultural dark age.

Property rights, most Americans will agree, are a good thing. They give people an incentive to work and produce, by allowing them to reap the benefits of their own labor and creativity. But though the Framers treated property rights as essential, they did not view them as absolute. In particular, they drew a sharp distinction between physical property and intellectual property. If you own a house, it's yours until you sell it. But if you have a neat idea, or write a fine book, it's yours for only a limited period, after which it enters the public domain, where everyone can have free and equal access to it. Theoretically, a copyright should last just long enough to give people an incentive to create and innovate.

In the past forty years, though, we've somehow lost sight of the notion that a copyright should be temporary. The distinction between real property and intellectual property—between things and ideas—has been blurred. Since 1960, copyrights have been extended eleven times; they can now, in some cases, last well beyond a hundred years (the life of the artist plus seventy years). As Lessig remarks, it seems as if every time Mickey is in danger of entering the public domain copyright terms get longer.

Think about it. If current copyright law had been in effect a hundred years ago, the U.S. government might have had to pay royalties to use the image of Uncle Sam, and so would anyone who wanted to depict a jolly red-suited Santa Claus. (Both were created by the cartoonist Thomas Nast, who died in 1902.) The consequences of broader intellectual-property protections have at times been ridiculous. In 1995, ASCAP tried to get summer camps to pay licensing fees for the songs the kids sang around the campfire. Disney went after day-care centers in Florida that had crude murals of Mickey and Goofy on their walls. And last year a satirical novel that borrowed elements from "Gone with the Wind" found itself embroiled in litigation with Margaret Mitchell's estate. The once open fields of culture are increasingly fenced in with concertina wire.

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

In Lessig's view, this aggressive regime of copyright protection has allowed the media and software giants (the "old Soviets," he calls them) to monopolize our cultural, intellectual, and political life. In particular, the Internet, which once promised to be a wonderful new mechanism for producing and distributing culture from the bottom up, has been reduced to territory, colonized and crisscrossed with barricades. "There's no chance of changing this," he told me. "This is over."

Lessig may be nostalgic for the Internet's Paris Commune phase, when anyone could be an artist or an entrepreneur, without lawyers and corporations manning the gates. Still, he retains a healthy respect for property, and his prescriptions take account of copyright owners' interests. He suggests that copyrights should last five years but be renewable fifteen times, except for copyrights on software, which should be renewable once. And anyone should be able to license music from a record company for a reasonable fee.

One can quibble over the details. If you were thinking about deploying a team of top engineers to come up with a sophisticated new operating system, you might hesitate if you knew that homegrown variants were soon going to flood the market. But this is only a matter of where to draw the line. Lessig's real concern is that we return to the way America approached intellectual property throughout most of its history. Traditionally, legislators sought to balance competing interests. Lessig cites the example of the piano roll. A century ago, a boom in player-piano sales led sheet-music authors to complain that piano-roll makers were stealing their music and violating their copyrights. So, to protect the songwriters, Congress rewrote the law, but in a manner that allowed the player piano, a new technology, to continue to flourish. Henceforth, once a song was recorded, any piano-roll maker could copy it, for a small fee. The song was available to all, but the songwriter got paid for it. In essence, Congress said that copyright was about compensation, not control.

That idea became the basis for laws regarding everything from jukeboxes to cable TV. But when the Internet came along the government forgot about balance and decided that property rights trump all. Maybe we ought to stop coddling the Scrooge McDucks and free Steamboat Willie.

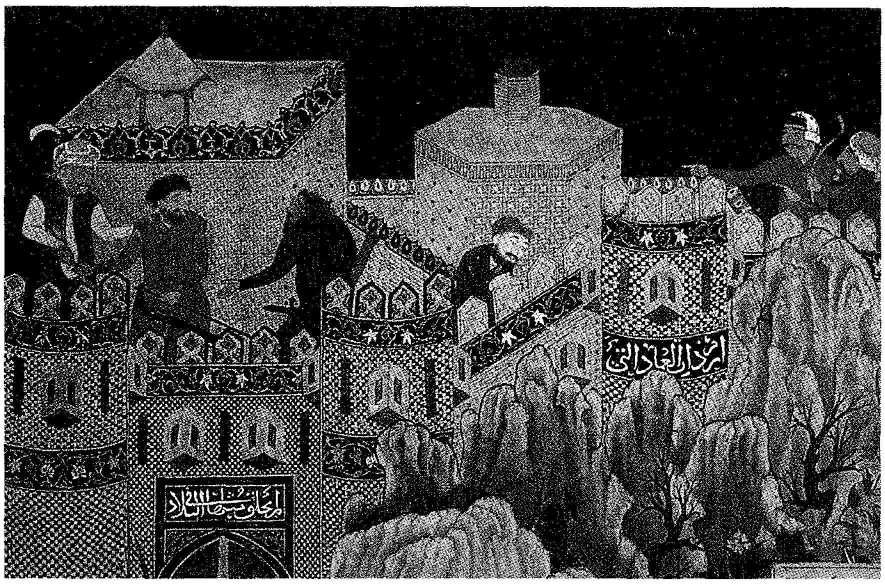
—*James Surowiecki*

LETTER FROM HERAT

# THE LOST CITY

*A former jewel of Central Asia, now under the rule of the Northern Alliance.*

BY CHRISTOPHER DE BELLAIGUE



*During the fifteenth century, Herat was the capital of Shah Rukh's vast empire.*

DETAIL FROM "ISKANDER VISITING THE HERMIT"/BRITISH LIBRARY/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

At noon on November 15th, I was in an old Toyota, on a road full of old Toyotas, having crossed the Iranian border, on the approach to Herat, in northwest Afghanistan. Two or three hours into the journey, the traffic of Toyotas, most of them carrying armed men, got thicker, and the dust they kicked up was impenetrable. The driver turned on his headlights. Low huts appeared along the road, and we guessed that we were nearing the city, but the dust made it hard to be sure. After each car passed, there was a moment of grainy blindness, and then one of clarity, once the dust was behind us. During the clear moments, I was able to see quite far into the distance and could make out a formation of low shapes, darker than the horizon. The driver saw it, too. "Herat," he said, and then we entered another dust cloud and it disappeared.

When we reëmerged, the silhouette of the city was different; there were now several very tall shapes, as unexpected as a giraffe's neck on a hog's back. It took less than a second for the shapes to disappear into the next cloud of dust. I thought, Victorian factory chimneys!

As we drove on, I kept looking out for the chimneylike shapes, trying to get a better view. There were five of them, and they rearranged themselves as our perspective changed, appearing and reappearing out of the dust. They seemed to lean precariously. Every now and then, their shafts picked up the sun and gave off an obscure sparkle. Among them there was a square building—it had a high dome, shaped like a chef's hat.

We came to a checkpoint. There was an air of bustling good humor. Three days before, the Taliban had fled Herat, after a relatively bloodless uprising by its inhabitants. A smiling Northern Alliance mujahid took my passport and examined it, upside down. Then he gave it back, and motioned for the makeshift gate to be opened. As we drove through, the men on both sides of the road waved, as if we were coming to liberate the city. Pickups swept past; in the back were men with Kalashnikovs and handheld grenade launchers. Next to the road, there was an overturned armored personnel carrier. A sign announced that the area had been cleared of mines.

I looked up at the shapes. They were

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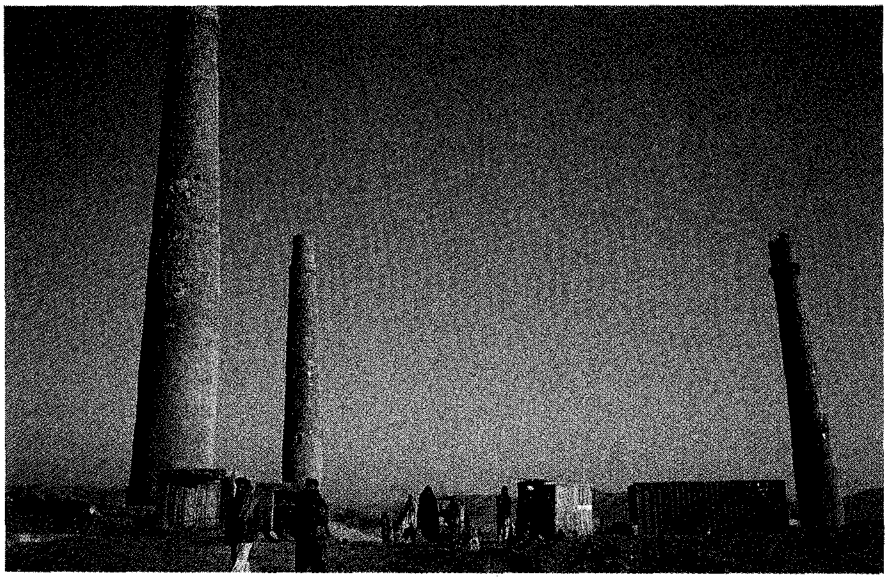
not chimneys but stupendous minarets, more than a hundred feet high. I realized now what had caught the sun. White marble ran up along part of the shafts, like the torn casing of a beautiful sausage. Farther along the road, an artillery shell had made a large hole in one of the minarets, and birds were flying in and out of it. The dome I had seen was turquoise, and ribbed. But my eyes kept returning to the minarets, and to pieces of colored faience, chipped bits of glazed clay, that lay around their bases, glittering in the sun.



*His wife, Gawhar Shad, oversaw the building of many of the minarets.*

PASCAL MAITRE/MATRIX

I was staying at the Mowafaq Hotel, in the new part of the city, and Ismail Khan was about to give a press conference nearby. Khan had been a commander of the Afghan resistance during the Soviet occupation. In 1992, four years after the Soviets left, he became the governor of Herat. In 1995, he set out to capture Kandahar, in the south, then held by the nascent Taliban—an act of folly that led to the fall of Herat. Khan spent nearly three of the next six years in a Taliban jail. He escaped, organized his forces, and led an uprising; he was now reclaiming what he believed to be his.

The difficulty was that Khan hadn't actually liberated the city; it had dropped into his lap, and his ability to impose his rule was weaker than he would have liked. He appeared, sliding out of a spotless Pajero, wearing a cream-colored pashmina shawl, to orchestrated cries of "Hail the Emir!" During the press conference, he made a vague commitment to pluralism, but it was evident that he wasn't really interested in sharing power. He was an authoritarian ruler, people said afterward, recalling the time when he was last in power. The fear was that he'd be just as repressive now.

At seven o'clock, the hotel management turned on a generator, and there was electric light for two and a half hours. I bribed a room boy to remove a dead bird from my bathroom, and had a cold shower. I ate dinner. There was a curfew. At nine-thirty, the generator was switched off. I paid the room boy more money to give me a paraffin lamp and a cup of tea from his thermos.

At the end of the fifteenth century, there may have been as many as twenty minarets in Herat, as well as mosques, prayer halls, and colleges. This was at the height of the Timurid Renaissance. The Mongol conqueror Tamerlane—the first of the Timurids—had seized vast areas of Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Caucasus. In Herat, the renaissance began under his son, Shah Rukh, who had made the city his capital. Its patrons were forward-thinking humanists, Oriental Medici. They developed a magnificent but restrained architecture, a muscular setting for the rampant faience that adorned it. And, while the Timurids of Herat may have been Turkish speakers, they are responsible for some of the greatest achievements of Persian culture. The trophies of their military conquests were artistic: they returned from battle with miniaturists, poets, calligraphers, and bookbinders.

Shah Rukh's wife was Gawhar Shad, who was the personality of the age. Her name means "joyful jewel." She was a flamboyant patron of poets and painters and scholars, exercised extraordinary influence at court—she advised her husband on military campaigns, for instance—and was an architect in her own right, who may have helped design her own college and prayer hall and the minarets around them. (Gawhar Shad outlived her husband by a decade, maneuvered her favorite grandson onto the throne, and was eventually murdered.) The people of Herat still tell the story of a visit she made to inspect her college, accompanied by two hundred female attendants, after it had been cleared of its students, all of whom were male. One youth remained, having fallen asleep in his cell, and was discovered by an attendant and seduced. When Gawhar Shad found out, she ordered that all two hundred of her attendants be married to the students. She was laid to rest under the turquoise dome.

My alarm clock went off at six-thirty, and I fumbled in the darkness for matches to light the paraffin lamp.

There was a terrace at the end of the corridor, and I went outside. The streets below were twilit. Ismail Khan's men, the enforcers of the curfew, had gone home. Around the bazaar, near the old fort that dominates the city, there was the clack of a shutter being drawn up.

It was the first day of the fasting month of Ramadan. Tea and breakfast would be hard to find. I had a package of dates in my room—Produce of the Islamic Republic of Iran—and I ate some and went downstairs. The duty manager got a key and unlocked the door. As I stepped out, he said, "Be careful."

There was something precarious about this liberation. There had been rumors: that a thousand armed Uzbeks had entered the city from the north, that Khan's men had done battle with those of another mujahideen chief, that two men had been killed mysteriously at Khan's base. Last night, there had been the sound of firing, and tracery in the sky.

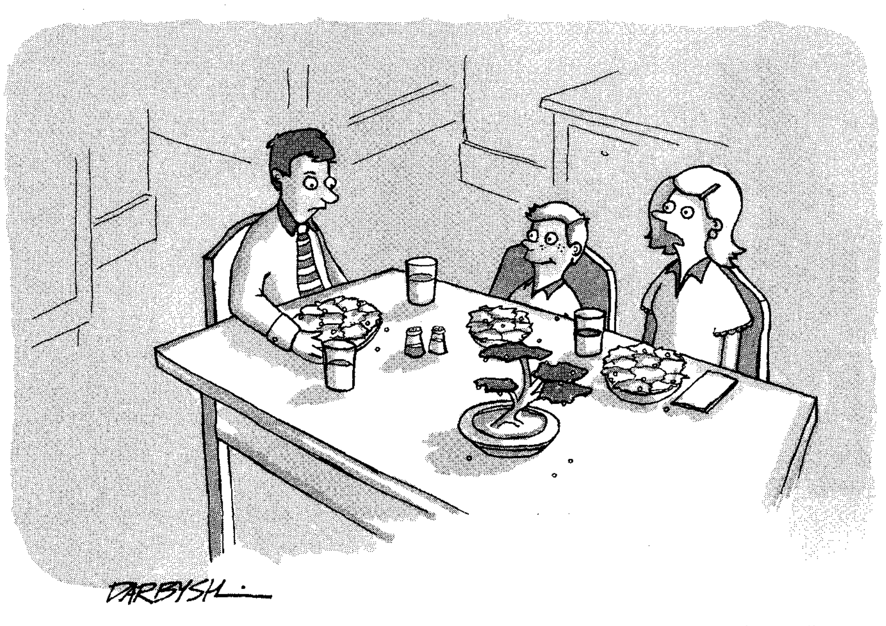
I walked south, past a traffic island where the Taliban had carried out hangings. People had deliberately driven their cars into the island earlier in the week, and its railings were twisted and bent.

I stopped outside the Friday mosque. Here, five centuries ago, Shah Rukh had survived an assassination attempt when he was forty-nine years old; had the assassins succeeded, the Timurid Renaissance might have been stopped in its tracks. Here, the day before, a crowd had proclaimed Khan "Commander of the Western Front," an honor he was said to have accepted with becoming reluctance. Here, too, in a few days' time, the city's "whitebeards"—men known for their wisdom—would choose someone to take over the running of the city.

I set out, walking the lanes of the old city, being led this way and that. The walls were made of daub, sometimes reinforced with brick. The houses and mosques and cisterns were built around small courtyards, huddled around the fort at the center and around each other; the design was born out of a medieval trepidation, a fear of another Genghis Khan (who sacked Herat in 1222, and, according to one account, only forty of the city's hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants survived). Sometimes I came to a collapsed wall, or found myself facing a plastic curtain at the entrance to a house, and I retreated. Sometimes the lanes narrowed and became nothing more than small corridors, with barrel-shaped roofs just high enough to accommodate a short man on a donkey. There were flowerpots. A burka flapped on a laundry line. I passed bathhouses that had been in use for five centuries. Occasionally, as I walked, a young boy would fall in step with me. One old man, holding a towel, asked me whom I had come to see. I said a name and the man wandered off, saying that he didn't know him but that the city had changed so much, so many new people had arrived from the villages, that no one really knew anyone anymore.

By the time I got back to the new town, the sun was quite high, and the streets were filling with people enjoying the small freedoms brought about by the change in regime. A passing car played a Bollywood film soundtrack. I joined a line outside a portrait studio whose window was full of retouched prints of men with dreamy eyes. Women, singly or in twos, bought turnips and carrots. Men were freshly shaved. The Taliban, believing that the Prophet had worn a long beard, had insisted that all men wear long beards. What had been the expression on the men's faces as the barber took up his scissors? Mischief? Triumph? Revenge?

For a while, I found myself walking behind a woman—a young woman, I guessed, from her fast, shambolic walk. She wore red shoes and a burka. In Iran, where I live, the equivalent garment is the chador. A loose, unbuttoned length of cloth, the chador needs constant attention. Your hands need to be free, to prevent it from slipping, or you need to tuck it under your chin or clench one end between your teeth. And, although the breasts and buttocks are swathed, the eyes and mouth, the most suggestive parts of the woman's body, are exposed.



*"The tiny red things were harvested from Frankie's bonsai tree."*

The burka, being a long, sleeved pinafore without a hole for the head, is much more comprehensive. When the woman ahead of me stopped to ask a fruit vender a question, I loitered in front of some bananas, and watched her breath vaporize against the perforated cloth in front of her face. The burka's eccentricity is its color. Unlike most Islamic garments devised for women, the burka is rarely black. In Herat, it is turquoise—not the rich, grainy turquoise of a Timurid tile but a washed-out sort of turquoise, which gives it a pallid gaiety.

At Ismail Khan's press conference, he had countermanded the Taliban's edict that women wear the burka out-of-doors. Henceforth, he said, they would be free to wander about in *manteau* (the coat is European in inspiration and Persian has taken the French word) and head scarf. But Khan doesn't have the moral authority to tell women what their husbands, brothers, and fathers will abide. During the week I was in Herat, I never saw a woman in the streets without a burka.

The woman turned right, into a residential lane, and I walked on toward the minarets. Beyond the checkpoint at the edge of the city, men were taking apart old truck containers and turning them into sheet metal to sell to the smiths in the bazaar. Children were using the folded sheets of metal as trampolines, and made a mellow clashing sound.

The area once occupied by Gawhar Shad's college was enclosed by a low wall that served no obvious function except to distinguish its desolation and neglect from that of a neighboring patch, where another college had stood. Bricks were scattered among millions of pieces of faience. I sat down on a tombstone.

The destruction of the city started with the Uzbeks, who captured Herat in 1507, and it continued with the Iranian Safavids, Shiites, who controlled the city for more than two centuries. The colleges were plundered. They lost their students, and then their roofs. People used the bricks to build houses. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Herat came under the sway of Pashtun emirs from the south, and gradually was caught up in the Great Game played between Russia and Britain for regional supremacy and control of India. In 1885, one of these emirs, probably on the advice of his British protectors, set out to destroy all outlying buildings north of the city—anything that could provide cover for a Russian advance. The colleges, mosques, and prayer halls, dilapidated but still radiant, were razed. Nine minarets survived.

Two minarets collapsed in an earthquake in 1931. Another fell twenty years later. Then, in 1979, the Soviets destroyed one of two minarets that had belonged to Gawhar Shad's college (its stump remains); the second took a glancing hit in the midriff (that's the one where the birds live). Herat rebelled shortly after the Soviet invasion, and the Soviets sent three hundred tanks to teach the city a lesson. Five thousand were killed. The five minarets that stand today were once grape blue. Their shafts were covered with lozenges, full of mosaic flowers, and their bases with carved marble panels. But the flowers and the marble fell to the ground with the pounding. When the Soviets retook the city, the local mujahideen, led by Ismail Khan, then a young commander, retreated into the surrounding countryside. The Soviets laid mines around the minarets, to make it harder for Khan to get in again.

Earlier, I had met a gynecologist in a mosque. He had told me that Herat's history could be seen as a struggle between war and culture. In the past twenty-three years, war had won some stunning victories.

The next day, I had an appointment with Dr. Muhammad Naser Kafash. Dr. Kafash had been a friend of Muhammad Seyed Mashal, a former governor of the city and one of its most celebrated artists. Mashal had been a miniaturist, a sculptor, a composer, and a singer; he had also designed clothes. He had set up a college of fine arts, Herat's first since Timurid times. Students had come from Kabul and Kandahar.

At the end of the nineteen-eighties, Mashal had embarked on a great project: to transform a hall at the governor's secretariat into a "golden salon." It was to be his gift to the nation. The salon had octagonal columns, inspired by Gawhar Shad's minarets and decorated with geometric bands. The bases were cobalt blue, with intricate gold patterns. The doors to the salon, also bright blue, were adorned with arabesques and flowers. The ceiling had highly stylized Shiraz cypresses. One wall, in homage to the Herat school of painting, was taken up with romantic depictions of rural Khorasan province—mountains that looked like billowing hair, dervishes sitting on the grass, deer and wolves, partridges and leopards, and an image of Majnun, Islam's slightly loony Romeo, in pursuit of his Leyla. In the spandrels of the arches were plaster reliefs, lurid representations of horses and dragons. On another wall were portraits of the great Timurids. Nearby, there was a cinema, and a fountain featuring horses sculpted by Mashal.

In 1995, when the Taliban captured Herat, they scratched out or painted over Leyla and Majnun and all other representations of humans and animals. They removed the royal portraits. The fountains were torn down; so, too, was the cinema. Mashal's great library, situated near the minarets, had been destroyed in earlier fighting. And then Mashal died. Although the official cause of his death was respiratory complications, it was commonly understood that he died of a broken heart.

His friend Dr. Kafash is about five feet four, with slightly bowed legs. He has a long beard and soft gray eyes. He showed me into his small study. A glass of water stood by his cushion. He had a heart problem, he explained, that meant it would be dangerous for him to fast.

At the time of the Soviet invasion, Dr. Kafash said, Herat had probably a thousand intellectuals ("enlightened ones" was the phrase he used in Persian). There were scholars, many with good libraries. There were four theatres. There were composers and poets. He mentioned one poet, Samanbur, a woman, but said you couldn't buy her anthologies, because she was illiterate; you had to go and listen to her. There was another, Setareh—the name means star—who used to sing, "I'm the daughter of Herat, I'm a stick of candy, I couldn't be more Herati." I wasn't sure whether Setareh was entirely respectable.

With the war, the enlightened ones left. Many went to Iran. The Soviet invasion was followed by civil war, and then the Taliban's gross, gratuitous rule. Together, I suggested, these wars made for a sustained assault on culture, spread over more than two decades.

Dr. Kafash corrected me: not two decades but *five centuries*. "The last time Herat was happy," he said, "Husain Baiqara was on the throne."

Sultan Husain Baiqara, Shah Rukh's great-great-nephew, ruled Herat, and large parts of Afghanistan and Central Asia, from 1470 until his death, in 1506. In his youth, he had been an ambitious mercenary captain. Once he gained power, however, he devoted his reign to enjoying it. In the struggle between war and culture, he had switched sides. Even as the Uzbeks took control of neighboring Transoxiana, Sultan Husain resisted calls to mount a preëmptive campaign, preferring to indulge his appetite for pleasure—for sex, sport, and art. But his neglect of military affairs led to the fall of Herat to the Uzbeks.

To my ear, Dr. Kafash's Persian was full of unexpected vowels and clashing consonants. In Iran, such an accent is associated with illegal construction-site workers and odd-job men. I thought of my friends in Tehran, with their crystal accents and contaminated vocabulary.

"Do you know how to tell a Persian word from an Arabic word?" Dr. Kafash asked. "If the word contains a soft or a hard 'G,' a 'P,' or a 'B,' you can be sure it's Persian."

I asked for an example.

"*Gap*," he said. The word means "conversation," and in Dr. Kafash's pronunciation the word plops, sounding like a drop of rain on a windowsill. In Iran, you more often hear the Arabic *sohbat*.

All Persian, Dr. Kafash said, has been polluted by Arabic, but the Persian spoken in Afghanistan less so than that in Iran. "Western Persia was under Arab occupation longer than we were," he said. "Ours is purer." In Dr. Kafash's view, Persian wasn't so much Iran's language but a shared heritage—just as the Timurid empire had been a shared culture, with both Persian and Turkic elements. Historically, Herat was part of a province, Khorasan, which has been conquered from the west and the east.

With so much in common with Iran, I remarked, he must feel very Iranian.

I had provoked Dr. Kafash, and he denied my suggestion. The Heratis are not the Iranians' cultural junior, Dr. Kafash insisted. Heratis distrust Iran—they see it as bigoted, arrogant, and prone to hegemonic delusions—even though they identify with its culture.

Afghanistan became a discrete political entity only in the mid-eighteenth century, and there is a history of military incursion and adventurism. In 1838, it was a thrilling defense of Herat's fort, organized by a British officer, that prevented the city from being reincorporated into Persia. Afghanistan's unity was also threatened by Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, when Shiite irredentism, in Herat especially, was stirred up by Ayatollah Khomeini's new theocracy. Now, days after the Taliban's flight, Heratis were already wondering how Iran's consul-general would seek to turn events to Iran's advantage.

Dr. Kafash excused himself and got up, patting down the folds of his shirt.

While he was gone, I looked at his bookshelf. There were volumes you find in every respectable Persian library: Saadi's "Rose Garden"; the verses of Rumi and Hafez; Firdawsi's epic "Book of Kings." There were books of Koranic interpretation, some of them in Arabic. There was other poetry, some of it written by Heratis during the Timurid Renaissance.

I heard whispering from the other side of the door. Dr. Kafash seemed to be conferring with his wife and his son. He came back accompanied by a young boy, who carried tea and dates. His wife remained out of view.

"If it weren't for the tuition I give him at home," Dr. Kafash said, referring to his son, "he wouldn't know a word of poetry. I teach him physics and mathematics, too. At his school, the Taliban forced the students to spend their time learning religious obligations." He nodded at the boy, who went out into the corridor and came back with a book called "Islamic Instruction."

Dr. Kafash was looking out the window. "Over there, you know," he said, nodding toward the minarets, "they didn't just give religious lessons. They had painting, calligraphy, and mathematics."

Before the Soviet invasion, the authorities had planted cypresses and almond and Judas trees where Gawhar Shad's college had stood. They enclosed the garden with tall pines, and dug irrigation channels. On public holidays, the garden was closed to men. Protected by the pines, the women of Herat slipped off their head scarves and strolled around the garden, or sat on the grass and ate cakes while their children frolicked.

Dr. Kafash glanced at his son, who was smiling, delighted to have a foreign visitor. When the Taliban took over, Dr. Kafash had been teaching at a private college for Shiites. That in itself was interpreted by the Sunni Taliban as an act of subversion. The school was closed down; on three occasions, Dr. Kafash was locked up. Once, he was kept under house arrest for four months.

"If things were so bad, why didn't you leave?" I asked.

"The ones who loved their motherland didn't go, the ones who wanted never to be strangers."

Life in Iran, where many of his friends had gone, might have been easier, but Dr. Kafash refused to abandon Herat. I admired his obstinacy.

Toward the end of our conversation, Dr. Kafash said he wanted to offer me a book of his poetry. The collection was dedicated to "our suffering and unfortunate people, dear Afghanistan." There was a photograph of the author, taken ten years earlier. I was astonished by the difference. The photograph showed a young and vibrant man in his forties, with a head of hair and a deep black beard. The man before me was weathered and weary. He had become an old man, and quite bald.

The morning I was due to leave, I went to visit the Herat Museum, which occupies a former armory in the old fort. Last spring—around the time that the Taliban dynamited two monumental statues of Buddha in the province of Bamian—officials removed the museum's sculptures, including some that dated from pre-Islamic times, and destroyed them. But the museum was still meant to contain many beautiful and important things: Timurid ceramics, illuminated copies of the Koran, very old bronze and copper objects, even some miniatures.

At the gate to the fort, Khan's men told me that the museum had been padlocked after the liberation. They let me onto its roof. Through the skylights, I saw a few dusty pots and smashed dis-

## FREE MERCY

The woman beside me on the jitney weeps
into a cell phone, "You're leaving me!"
Every seat is taken, it's late, and I'm tired
so I rehearse objections as she cries, "Billy!
You love the way I *swim*! You love *my* eyes!"
I try a childhood distraction trick: my dog
Rusty runs away, it's my birthday, and beautiful
Miss Crittenden, my first-grade teacher, is leaving
to get married. . . . "Hear that?" the woman cries,
ripping a magazine. "It's my heart!" My father
dies bankrupt and I don't go to college. . . . "That time
you saw the cuts on my wrist and asked if I'd do *that*
over you and I said no? I *was* lying." I stutter, lisp,
apologize too much. . . . "I'm coming back to an empty house?"
My number is called, I'm going to Vietnam. . . . "Billy, please,
a little mercy . . ."

Last Sunday my son got tired of skating so we walked
around the cemetery by the pond and stopped to read
a poem called "Free Mercy" inscribed on a stone in 1688,
about a boy who died at sea "innocent and happy," and
I wondered if it meant one shouldn't have to pay for it,
and we stood there, my wife, son, the baby, and me, each
a tiny piece of free luck, and the kids skating behind us,
laughing, as if Miss Crittenden would never leave them.

—*Philip Schultz*

play cases. I was mystified. The Taliban had fled Herat in disarray. They had left cash and gold in the bank, and guns in the police stations. Could some official have stolen the artifacts just as Herat was changing hands? Or had the townspeople, who controlled the city for several hours before Khan's arrival, made off with them? These works of art, I concluded, are now bound for Western collections, where they will sit alongside almost every other surviving movable object of beauty ever made in Herat.

I climbed the rampart of the fort and walked its length, about a quarter of a mile, to the westernmost tower. From here, I could see into the courtyards, invisible from street level, of the old merchants' houses. Many of them had been abandoned; some looked as though they had been bombed. The intact ones had trees. There were people on the roofs, laying out salted goatskins. Beyond, I could see mounds of bricks, baking slowly over burning dung—the bricks with which the city may be rebuilt.

I heard the report of small artillery pieces. The guns had been captured by Ismail Khan, and were being prepared for reuse. The sound came from the east. Outside the city was the vague outline of a monumental portal, the shrine of Khwaja Abdullah Ansari. Two nights earlier, a crate of air-dropped American food had neatly pierced the awning over the Khwaja's head, scattering packets of peanut butter over his tomb.

I left the fort and walked north, toward the minarets. After about five minutes, I sensed that there was a man walking alongside me, a tall man, perfectly in step. I tried to walk faster—without making it obvious—but the man's legs were longer than mine, and he kept up without difficulty.

He was a car dealer. He brought in Toyotas, mostly retired Japanese taxis, via Dubai, from the Iranian border. Money was scarce—the Iranian border was still closed to commercial traffic—and his mother was ill. He had decided to visit a pair of very old shrines, with a shared graveyard, that lay on the road to the minarets. He would scatter seed on the tombs and pray for the health of his mother and for Toyotas.

At the entrance to the shrines, we shook hands. "You're not coming in?" he asked. I said no, I wanted to have a last look at the minarets. Another minaret might topple before I returned. As I was about to say farewell, I glimpsed a group of about twenty or thirty men, a short distance away, looking at a grave.

"Is that a funeral?" I asked.

The car dealer went over to investigate.

"You remember the three mujahideen who were captured by the Taliban in Badghis?" he said, when he returned. "You know, the ones they hanged about two weeks ago?"

The three men were buried in adjacent, unmarked graves. The brother of one of the victims had come from Badghis to recover the body and take it back to his village.

We walked toward the group and stood a little way off. The man who had come for his brother's body was inside an open grave, digging. He didn't know in which of the three graves his brother was buried; if necessary, he would dig up all of them, until he found the right one. We moved to within earshot of the men. They were offering advice to the man inside.

"Check his pockets!" one of the men said.

"Are those his clothes?" another asked.

From inside the grave, a voice answered, "How can I tell? Lots of mujahideen wear these clothes."

"Check his pockets!" repeated the first man.

"That's what I'm trying to do! I have to get to them first."

"Why don't you turn him over?" someone said.

"I'm trying to find his hands, so I can untie them."

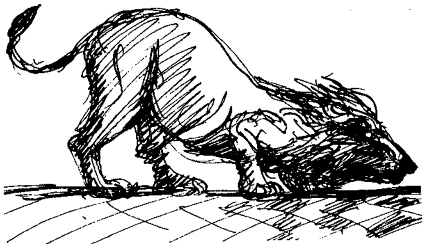
There was a silence. Everyone leaned forward. A loud grunt came from inside the grave.

"He's trying to turn him over," one of them said.

"He shouldn't do that," another said. "They cut out his eyes."

"And his heart."

"It should be possible to identify him, even if he doesn't have any eyes."



The car dealer explained that captured mujahideen are beaten until they're half dead, then their hearts and eyes are cut out and they are hanged upside down.

A bystander was getting impatient. "Can't you turn him over?" he asked, irritably. Perhaps he was a family member, too.

There was a collective gasp. "Here! I've found these," the man in the grave shouted. His hand appeared, holding some worry beads. A man took the beads and started to rub the dirt off them.

"He's in pretty good condition, actually," someone said, observing the corpse.

"Of course he is!" the man in the grave said. "He's a martyr. Martyrs don't rot."

A gap appeared in the ranks of the spectators. I pushed closer and was now standing on the grave's lip, looking down. A tired-looking man was leaning on a spade. At his feet was what seemed to be a jumble of old clothes. He had a muddy comb in his hand. He said, to no one in particular, "This was his comb." He looked at me, and his expression grew perplexed. Then two men hauled him out of the grave.

The Toyota dealer was by my side. I asked him how the man was going to get his brother's body out.

"He'll go back to Badghis and tell the family he's found him. Then they'll collect money from the villagers to hire a vehicle and bring the body back to the village."

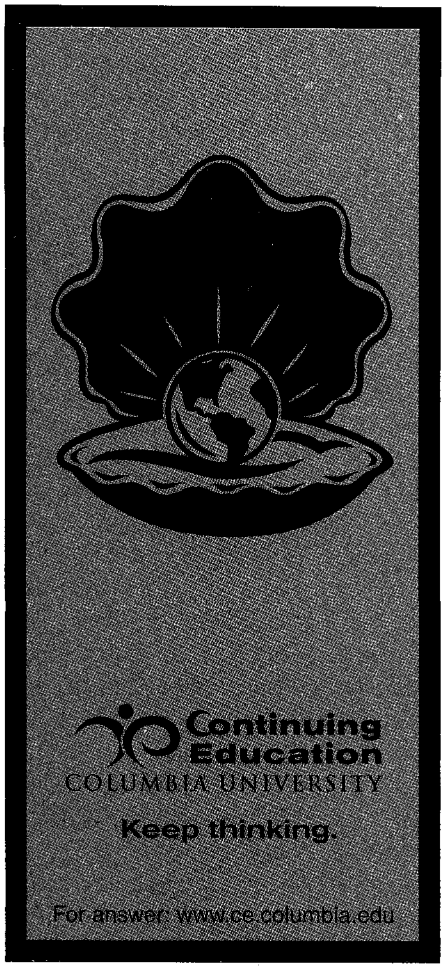
"But that will be expensive."

"Yes. About two million afghanis." Roughly fifty dollars.

I counted out the money that I would need for my return journey. That left about twenty-five dollars, which I gave to the man with the spade. He took the money without any acknowledgment and started shovelling earth onto his brother.

Later, leaving the city, I asked the driver to stop very briefly by the minarets. I wandered about for a minute, but it was hard to concentrate. I was worried about missing the flight from Mashhad to Tehran that evening. I had bought my wife an alabaster figurine and I was wondering if she would like it. Before I left, I leaned down and picked up three pieces of faience: blue, turquoise, and black.

It was only after I got back to Tehran that I wondered whether I should have left them where they were. ♦



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### ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

# BATTLE FOR THE BARNES

*Can one of America's greatest private collections survive?*

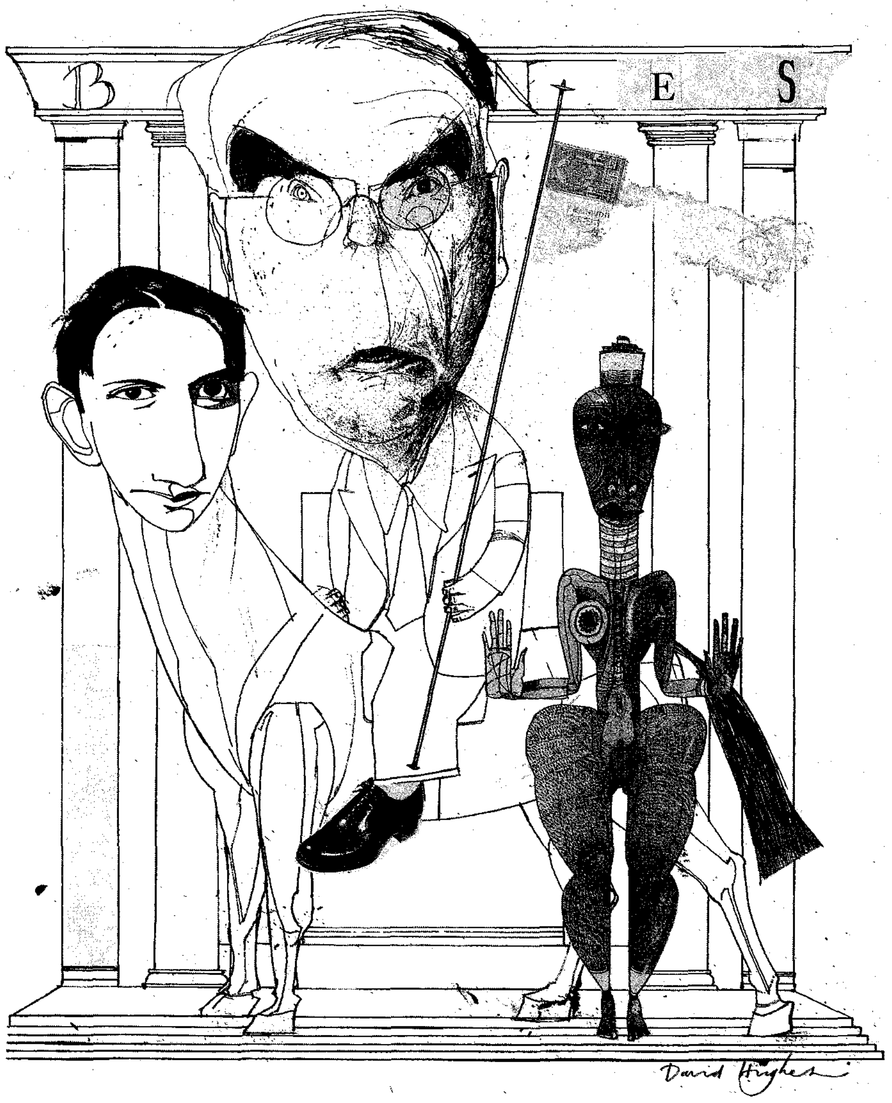
### BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

Before he died, in 1951, a Philadelphia businessman named Albert Barnes built what may be the greatest private art collection in American history. Like Henry Clay Frick, who filled his mansion on Fifth Avenue with Old Masters, and Isabella Stewart Gardner, who kept her eclectic collection in a Venetian-style palace she built in Boston, Barnes arranged for his paintings and sculptures to be housed and exhibited in perpetuity. But Barnes had grander ambitions than Frick and Gardner; he had a social agenda. He wanted to use his art to redress issues of inequality, particularly racial prejudice against African-Americans. He established a foundation to insure that his collection would be not so much a museum as a classroom, where blacks and whites would study together and learn that painting and sculpture could unite the most disparate peoples and cultures. "It wasn't really about the art for Barnes," Kimberly Camp, the executive director and C.E.O. of the Barnes Foundation, says. "It was about changing the society."

Barnes's priorities become immediately clear at the foundation complex he built in the nineteen-twenties on thirteen acres just outside Philadelphia, in the Main Line suburb of Lower Merion. The gallery building itself has an austere Renaissance-inspired design, but around the front door Barnes installed a ceramic-tile decoration modelled on artifacts from the Ivory Coast. Such juxtapositions—European art beside African art, the work of non-Caucasian people next to that of whites—continue inside the building. "The renascence of Negro art," Barnes wrote in 1925, "is one of the events of our age which no seeker for beauty can afford to overlook." Barnes, however, bought few works by contemporary black artists. He owned hundreds of examples of tribal and folk art, but the heart of his collection is French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist pieces, in astonishing profusion. Renoir (a hundred and eighty-one works), Cézanne (sixty-nine), and Matisse (fifty-nine) are among the artists represented, many of them by their best paintings. There are about two thousand works in all, by artists ranging from El Greco and Rubens to Miró and Modigliani. As Barry Munitz, the president of the J. Paul Getty Trust, puts it, "There are some of the most spectacular paintings that the world has ever seen." The collection is currently valued at several billion dollars.

At first glance, the display, housed in twenty-three galleries, looks almost haphazard. Paintings are lined up next to and above one another, sometimes inches apart, and they are labelled with only a single word on their frames, identifying the artist: "Picasso" (there are forty-six), "Seurat" (six of his rare canvases), "Titian" (two of the handful in the United States). For viewers familiar with the way most museums group their art—by era and nationality—the effect of walking through the Barnes can be almost hallucinogenic. Some rooms feature a single painter, but others mix and match eras and genres. There is, however, some method to the jumble. Eighteenth-century Pennsylvania blanket chests are placed under Gauguins from the South Pacific, and the palettes and brushstrokes appear nearly identical. In 1930, Barnes commissioned Matisse to paint a mural—it became "La Danse"—and hung it on a wall opposite a Navajo textile and a door carving from the Ivory Coast. According to Kimberly Camp, the Barnes was "perhaps the first purposely multicultural collection in the country."

As such, the Barnes Foundation might be expected to thrive in an era more receptive to diversity in art and culture than Barnes's own time was. Instead, it is financially imperilled and perhaps mortally threatened. The story of Barnes's collection has turned out to be a lot like the story of his life—full of rancor, misunderstanding, and unhealed wounds.



*Albert Barnes sought to redress racism with his art, building a multicultural collection.*

DAVID HUGHES

Albert Barnes was born in Philadelphia in 1872; his father was a butcher who had lost an arm in the Civil War. When he was about eight, his mother took him to a revival meeting at a black church in New Jersey, and Barnes later dated his fascination with African-American culture to this transformative event. A precocious student, Barnes earned a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania at the age of twenty. A few years later, he set off for Germany to study chemistry. There he met a young scientist named Hermann Hille, who later joined him in Philadelphia. Barnes was thirty when the firm of Barnes & Hille opened for business.

Together, the two men conducted a series of experiments that led to the invention of a product they called Argyrol, a patent medicine used for everything from the treatment of sore throats to the prevention of blindness in infants. Hille handled the laboratory work and Barnes took care of marketing, and their business prospered. But, in a pattern that would recur throughout his life, Barnes feuded with his partner, and they separated in 1907, a year in which they shared almost two hundred thousand dollars in profits. Barnes continued to expand the business, then sold it, for six million dollars, in 1929, beating the stock-market crash by a couple of months.

Almost as soon as Argyrol began to earn large profits, Barnes started taking regular art-buying trips to Paris. He was almost entirely self-taught about art, but he possessed a businessman's self-confidence about his judgments. He had an abrupt and glowering style, and he quarrelled frequently with art dealers and even with favored artists. Thomas Hart Benton remembered Barnes as "both friendly, kindly, hospitable, and at the same time a ruthless, underhanded son of a bitch."

One relationship that endured throughout Barnes's collecting years was with the philosopher John Dewey. In 1917, when Barnes was forty-five years old and already a millionaire, he enrolled in Dewey's weekly seminar at Columbia University, and there he absorbed Dewey's progressive ideas. Barnes had never shown any special interest in social issues, but Dewey inspired him to put his collection to work for the public good. Barnes opened his foundation in 1922, stipulating that it was to be "founded as an educational experiment . . . for the spread of the principles of democracy and education." The way the experiment would work, Barnes thought, was through the direct exposure of ordinary citizens to great works of art, which weren't merely to be viewed but taught in classes according to Barnes's own instruction. Drawing on the work of Dewey and other radical thinkers of the day, Barnes believed in a kind of formalism—that there was no need to learn art history or to study the biographies of the creators of his masterpieces. Rather, he thought that art could be fully appreciated by studying its surface elements—color, line, and space. Barnes's students would, in theory, come from all walks of life. As he wrote in the foundation charter, "It will be incumbent upon the Board of Trustees to make such regulations as will ensure that it is the plain people, that is, men and women who gain their livelihood by daily toil in shops, factories, schools, stores and similar places, who shall have free access to the art gallery."

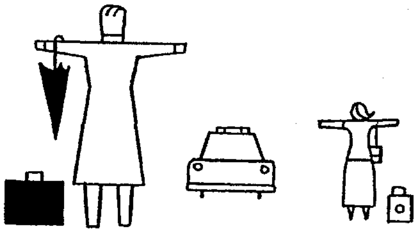
Because the collection was to be used only for educational purposes, Barnes banned "receptions, tea parties, dinners, banquets, dances, musicales or similar affairs" on the foundation grounds. The art was to be viewed on his terms or not at all. When T. S. Eliot asked to visit, Barnes told him, "Nuts." Le Corbusier and the sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, whose work Barnes collected, were similarly rebuffed. James Michener applied three times for admission when he was an undergraduate at Swarthmore and was rejected each time. Later, after he learned more about Barnes, Michener wrote to him and claimed that he was a poorly educated steelworker—and permission was promptly granted. (A wry appreciation of Barnes's peculiarities can be found in Howard Greenfeld's 1987 biography, "The Devil and Dr. Barnes.")

Barnes's interest in African-American culture was sincere, if patronizing. In 1925, he wrote, "The cultured white race owes to the soul-expressions of its black brother too many moments of happiness not to acknowledge ungrudgingly the significant fact that what the Negro has achieved is of tremendous civilizing value." (Bertrand Russell, whom Barnes hired to teach at the foundation during the Second World War, was unconvinced by Barnes's assertions, and later wrote that the doctor "could only get on with dogs and coloured people because he did not regard them as equals." Barnes fired Russell, who successfully sued him for breach of contract in a much publicized lawsuit.) Barnes studied the works of African-American writers, hosted gospel-music concerts, and contributed to the Urban League. But he never devised a viable strategy for bringing blacks and working-class people into the foundation—as students or visitors.

For years, Barnes struggled with the issue of the control of his art after his death. In 1901, he had married Laura Leggett, the demure daughter of a well-to-do Brooklyn grocer. But she showed little interest in the collection, devoting herself instead to the cultivation of an arboretum on the foundation grounds. (The couple had no children, and Laura Barnes died in 1966.) Barnes's will provided that, after his death, five of his friends would serve as trustees of the foundation, including Violette de Mazia, a woman three decades his junior, who accompanied him on art-buying trips. De Mazia was usually referred to as Barnes's "travelling companion," but Kimberly Camp says that she was his mistress. In any case, de Mazia was the critical figure in the life of the foundation for almost forty years. A diminutive woman of European descent—she made sure that her precise origins remained a mystery—de Mazia regarded herself as Barnes's true intellectual heir.

For the long-term control of his art, Barnes settled on what many regarded as a surprising choice. Starting in the nineteen-twenties, he had had thorny relationships with the local museums. He showed paintings by Soutine, Modigliani, and Matisse, among others, in a major exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, but the work received uniformly negative reviews from the local critics, and Barnes regarded the experience as a disaster. In the thirties, he refused to lend work to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which he called "a house of artistic and intellectual prostitution." His relations with his alma mater, Penn, were equally strained. So Barnes decided to choose administrators from far outside the local art establishment. According to his will, when the original trustees died they were to be replaced by new board members, four of whom were to be nominated by Lincoln University, one of Pennsylvania's historically black colleges. (Lincoln's president had become a close associate.) A fifth member would be nominated by the Mellon Bank, where Barnes kept his money.

Barnes was killed in an automobile accident in 1951, at the age of seventy-nine, and de Mazia gradually assumed control of the foundation. However, while she shared Barnes's theories about art interpretation, she did not share his social agenda, and the notion of the foundation as a force for racial understanding withered during her tenure. She taught classes to selected students, based on Barnes's theories, but the broader public had almost no chance to see the collection. It took a ten-year court battle, led by the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, to force the foundation to open its doors, in 1961, for two days a week. De Mazia forbade color reproductions of the paintings, and allowed photographs to appear only in publications that reflected Barnes's theories. It wasn't until after her death, in 1988, at the age of eighty-nine, that Lincoln had the chance to nominate her replacement.



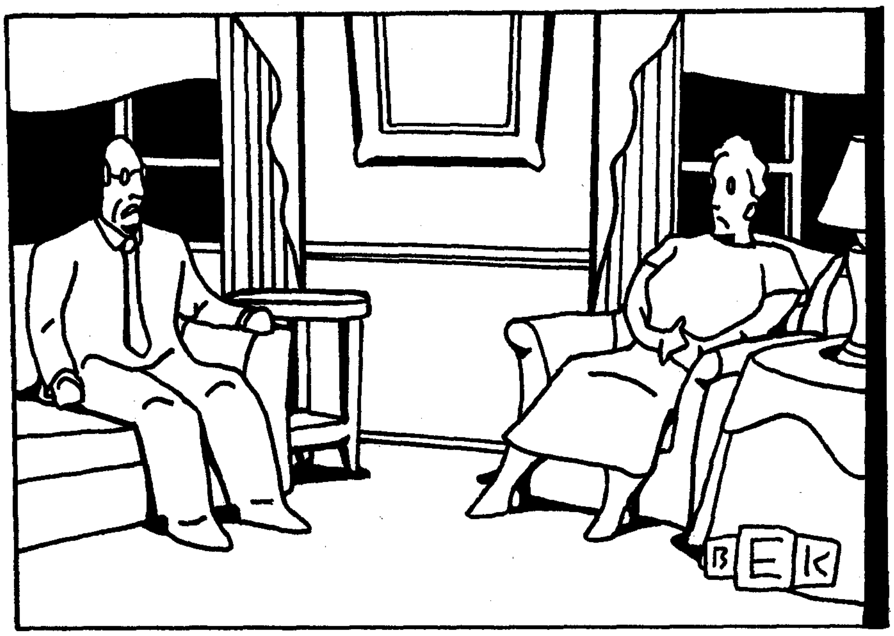
Barnes himself could not have wished for an administrator farther from the museum mainstream than Richard H. Glanton, who was born in the small town of Villa Rica, Georgia, in 1946. Glanton was one of the first black students at West Georgia College, and earned a law degree at the University of Virginia. He spent the early eighties as an aide to the governor of Pennsylvania, Richard Thornburgh. In 1983, Glanton went into private practice, eventually settling at the firm of Reed, Smith, Shaw & McClay, in Philadelphia, where he counted Lincoln University among his clients. Lincoln alumni include Thurgood Marshall and Langston Hughes, but the school had been in decline for some years. Its resources were modest; it had, for example, no art-history faculty. At the suggestion of Lincoln's then president, Niara Sudarkasa, Glanton was nominated to the board of the Barnes Foundation in 1990, and his fellow board members named him its president. (He declined a salary and remained a partner at his firm.)

With crisp suits, gold cufflinks, and strong opinions, Glanton posed a vivid contrast to the staid Philadelphia cultural scene. He had no background in the arts or in museum administration, but he never seemed less than confident. "The place was totally dysfunctional," Glanton told me recently, when we met in his law office, in downtown Philadelphia. "I felt that it was urgent that we take action. There were vast fluctuations in the humidity, frames cracking and peeling, wrinkles in the canvases. We had some of the icons of modern art, and long-term preservation of the building was essential to preserve the collection."

Under the terms of Barnes's will, the art in the collection could not be sold or loaned to other museums; indeed, the paintings had to remain in precisely the same arrangement inside the galleries as they were on the day that Barnes died. Furthermore, an endowment of nine million dollars was shrinking and could be invested only in low-yield securities. Glanton believed that the gallery needed millions of dollars for renovation, and, as he saw it, the Barnes's only marketable asset was the art itself. So, in 1991, he asked the Montgomery County Orphans Court, which supervises changes to wills, for permission to sell up to fifteen paintings to raise at least fifteen million dollars.

The move provoked wide protest, because the sale of such art, even on a modest scale, violated the generally accepted view that museums should not raise funds by deaccessioning prized assets. Moreover, Glanton was becoming a controversial figure for reasons beyond his connection to the Barnes Foundation. In 1992, a former associate at Glanton's firm charged him in a sexual-harassment suit, and her testimony, which came in the wake of the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings, was highlighted in the local papers. The jury found for the associate on the harassment claim but awarded damages only in a hundred-and-twenty-five-thousand-dollar libel judgment, for statements that Glanton made about her at a news conference. (The case was settled in lieu of an appeal.)

In time, Glanton withdrew the request to sell off paintings, and came up with another plan to save the Barnes. He persuaded the Orphans Court to allow the foundation to send up to ninety of its French Impressionist paintings on a tour of seven museums around the world. The tour began in 1993, at the National Gallery in Washington, and over the next two years earned fees of approximately seventeen million dollars, most of which was used to renovate the building. The *Times* reported, "The Barnes exhibition was one of the most successful in museum history, ranking just behind 'The Treasures of Tutankhamen.' " Glanton may have been immodest, but he wasn't wrong when he asserted that "the Barnes had languished in darkness since his death, until I arrived and turned the lights on."



*"You can wrap it up in a pretty package, but it's still life."*

• •

On November 11, 1995, the Barnes collection returned to its renovated home with a gala reopening for six hundred guests. Not everyone was pleased about the new prominence of the once sleepy institution. Indeed, a few dozen protesters greeted the celebrants that evening. Some of them were neighbors who worried about the prospect of a bustling, full-fledged museum in their quiet suburb. Others were former students of de Mazia's who were displeased that Glanton was neglecting the foundation's educational mission. The neighbors took their concerns to the Lower Merion Township commissioners, and, in December, they ordered the Barnes to stop work on a parking lot on its grounds.

Glanton filed a federal civil-rights lawsuit charging that the township had discriminated against the Barnes because it was then controlled by a historically black institution. "I grew up where you call things how you see them," Glanton told me. The town countersued the Barnes Foundation, as well as Glanton personally, for libel and defamation. The multiple lawsuits—a "racial Armageddon," as *Philadelphia Magazine* called it—continued for more than three years. As a strictly legal matter, the township was right and Glanton wrong—which a series of court rulings established. In a hundred-and-fifty-page opinion, Judge Anita B. Brody found that "the vast majority of the Barnes's evidence has nothing to do with race, but merely details various stages of a run of the mill land dispute." An appeals court forced the Barnes to pay some of the township's attorneys' fees, because its case was "frivolous." As part of the final settlements, the Barnes agreed to pay the township a hundred thousand dollars, to be used for charitable purposes, and its insurers covered four hundred thousand dollars of the defendants' legal fees on Glanton's behalf.

Still, although Glanton's complaints had no legal merit, it is possible to see his point that the foundation was singled out for special scrutiny. To listen to the neighbors, one would imagine that the Barnes were on a purely residential street. In fact, the foundation is on a busy thoroughfare, Latch's Lane, next door to the Episcopal Academy, where eight hundred and fifty students are enrolled. The school and several other religious and educational institutions in the area produce far more traffic than the Barnes, but whatever disputes they have had with the township or the neighbors have been settled far more amicably. However, these institutions have strong local roots, and the Barnes's new administrators did not, which surely contributed to the bizarrely contentious relationship between the foundation and its neighbors.

In the end, the township succeeded in enforcing tight restrictions on the number of visitors to the Barnes: the collection is now open three days a week for up to twelve hundred people per week. Reservations are required to see the galleries, and must be made through a cumbersome system of advance requests. Rulings by the Orphans Court also limit the admission price to five dollars, even though Kimberly Camp estimates that the over-all cost to the Barnes for each visitor is about sixty dollars.

The parking battle-cum-race war, its attendant legal costs, and Glanton's penchant for controversy began to test the board's faith in him. The Barnes was even sued by the city of Rome, which alleged that Glanton had reneged on a promise to bring the collection to the Museo Capitolino. The Barnes won this case, but it entailed more fees and bad publicity. According to a report by the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, the foundation spent almost six million dollars on legal fees between 1992 and 1998. Finally, in February of 1998, the board voted three to two against reappointing Glanton as president, and he resigned from the foundation.

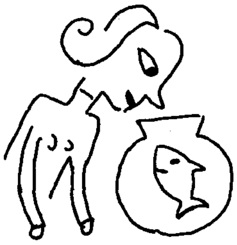
With Glanton's departure, the board decided to hire a full-time executive director. In November of 1998, Kimberly Camp came to the Barnes after a successful five-year run as the executive director of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, in Detroit. Camp is a large woman of forty-five years, with elaborately braided hair and the careful, soft voice of someone who has spent a professional lifetime in museum galleries. "Shortly after I arrived, I had the dubious pleasure of cashing in the last of the endowment," Camp told me. The money from the tour was gone, either spent on the renovation or held in a fund that could not be used for operating expenses. Camp hired the foundation's first development director, but was distressed to find that the Barnes was running an annual deficit of around a million dollars. "We're like a seventy-eight-year-old startup organization," Camp said. "We had no files, no donor list, no track record."

Camp favors wry understatement over Glanton-style invective, but her plans for the Barnes are, in some ways, just as controversial as his were. Camp wants to revive the foundation, she says, by taking it back to its roots as a multicultural educational institution for the study of Barnes's ideas. Currently, the Barnes has about a hundred and thirty students, but Camp hopes to expand that number, particularly with school-age kids from the Philadelphia area.

Last fall, eighteen people, who paid five hundred and fifty dollars each for a twenty-eight-week session, gathered at the Barnes for the first meeting of an introductory-art class. The students were what you might expect in an art class held on a Tuesday morning in the suburbs—all white, and virtually all homemakers or retirees. They did not appear to be the "plain people" whom Barnes envisioned his foundation serving. The teacher was a local artist named John Gatti—Barnes favored artists over academics as teachers, because he regarded them as less contaminated by the art-history establishment.

"We are going to talk about what Barnes referred to as the plastic elements of the arts," Gatti told the class. "We're not going to concern ourselves with the history behind the movements in art, the narrative of what came first and who influenced whom." Gatti concentrated instead on the impact of color, light, and line on the senses of the viewer. The reading list for the course was just two books: John Dewey's "Art as Experience" and parts of Barnes's 1925 treatise, "The Art in Painting."

Decades after Barnes's death, his foundation is still selling an undiluted version of his philosophy. Furthermore, it is the only institution in America organized around the theories of Albert Barnes. It's not that his formalist theories were necessarily wrong, but they are outdated. The school feels more like a posthumous vanity project than like an educational endeavor, as if a rich old man had endowed the continued study of his favorite dialect of Esperanto. Not surprisingly, the Barnes offers no degrees, and universities in the area have generally been reluctant to give course credit for study there. This exercise in institutional self-indulgence would be harmless enough if the foundation had other ways of prospering, but Barnes's educational mission seems a shaky basis for continued survival. Yet that, it appears, is the bet Kimberly Camp is placing in her bid to see the Barnes endure as a black-run institution. The dedication to advancing Barnes's personal agenda is what separates his foundation from the other collections turned museums, the Fricks and Gardners of the world, and Camp wants to preserve that distinction. She told me, "In 1988, the Barnes became a black organization overnight, and people saw that as incongruous because of who usually controls the cultural patrimony of the country, but I think that kind of view"—here she paused and smiled, searching for the right phrase—"bespeaks unhealthy social attitudes."



A recent study by the accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche found that the Barnes needed eighty-five million dollars to guarantee its long-term stability. More immediately, the report said that fifteen million dollars will be required over the next five years as an immediate "stabilization fund." Camp regards these targets as attainable, even though she has raised only about three million dollars so far. In 2000, the Barnes received a five-hundred-thousand-dollar grant from the J. Paul Getty Trust, in Los Angeles. The Getty also provided technical assistance in an effort to inventory the Barnes's archival material, which includes letters about the collection from people like Albert Einstein, Greta Garbo, and Booker T. Washington. (The foundation lacks complete records of its possessions, which include Barnes's former country home, a converted eighteenth-century farmhouse in nearby Chester Springs that is full of important decorative and folk art. None of it is on view to the public, and, under the terms of Barnes's foundation charter, neither the art nor the house can be sold.) The Getty's contribution raised speculation in the art world of the possibility of an alliance, or more, between the two institutions. After all, the Getty has vast resources and a modest collection, while the Barnes has magnificent paintings and almost no money. Barry Munitz, the Getty's president, told me, "The reason that we jumped in is that there is real potential for collaboration. But we do not want a Getty East or the Barnes-Getty. We don't want to have branches, like the Guggenheim. We would be happy to stop at meaningful collaboration with them as a healthy independent institution."

Munitz has sought to steer other funders in Camp's direction, particularly those in the Philadelphia area. After the Getty's contribution, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Wilmington Trust, and the Henry Luce Foundation each gave the Barnes five hundred thousand dollars. Munitz told me, "For me, the key is the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Clearly, it is going to play a major, major role. If Kimberly is going to survive there, the Barnes is going to have to partner with some major institutions in ways that it has not yet been doing." There is obvious appeal to this idea. A partnership would presumably involve short- or long-term loans of the Barnes's art, or perhaps another tour. The Philadelphia Museum of Art has a stable, if not large, base of funding, and it could allow many more people to see the Barnes collection. It draws seven hundred thousand visitors a year to its downtown facility. (The Barnes attracts sixty thousand.) A partnership could even, perhaps, provide a new building for the collection, in a more accessible location.

However, Camp—along with most people associated with the Barnes—doesn't want to yield any control of the art, especially to a white-run institution that Barnes himself despised. Any sort of change in the location of the art would have to be approved by the Orphans Court, which would probably do so only if there were no other option to protect the paintings. But, at the rate the Barnes is losing money, a change in the will or in the foundation charter does not seem out of the question.

For the time being, the situation is a stalemate. Camp has not yet shown that she can fund her vision of the Barnes as a center for multicultural education. The people with resources—Munitz and others—want to invest only in an institution that allows the world to see its collection. But the township's restrictions, as well as those in Barnes's will, make a substantial increase in attendance impossible. The spiral leads downward. In any event, Kimberly Camp's best hope may be for a new version of the only savior that the foundation has ever known. "What we really need," she said, "is a guardian angel." ♦

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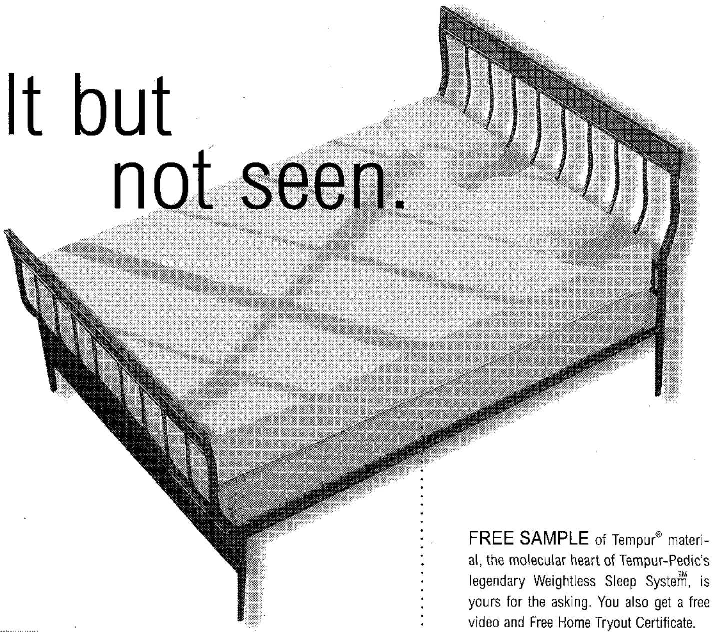

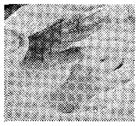

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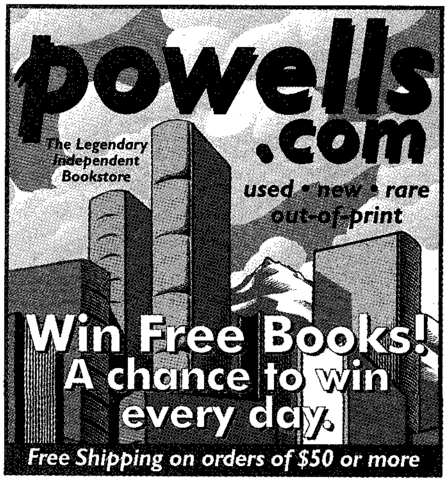
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### A REPORTER AT LARGE

# LIVES OF THE SAINTS

*At a time when Mormonism is booming, the Church is struggling with a troubled legacy.*

BY LAWRENCE WRIGHT

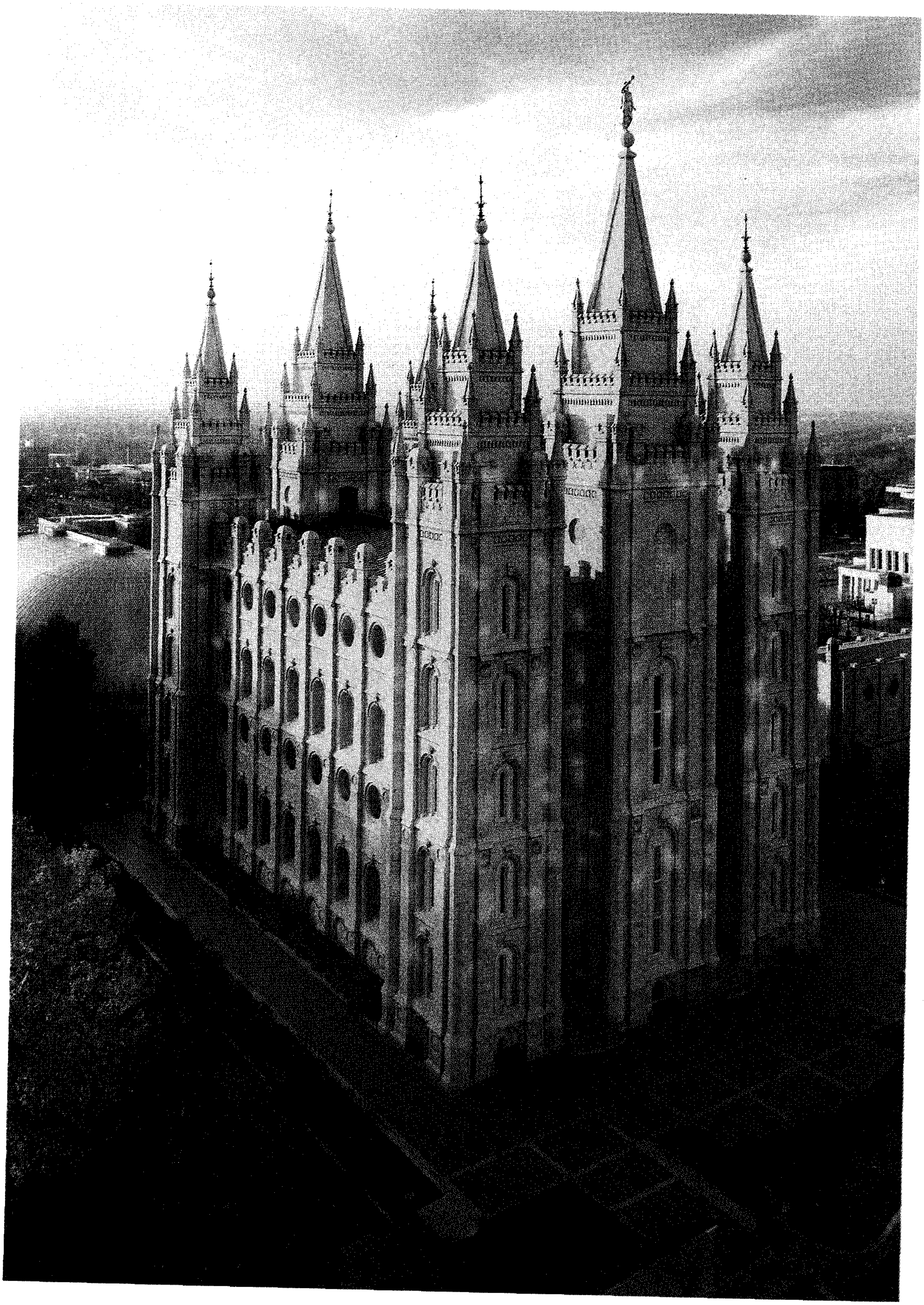
When the 2002 Olympic Winter Games open in Utah next month, the world will be greeted by a young, well-scrubbed, and ingratiating religion. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has its headquarters in Salt Lake City, and although its leaders have taken pains to keep the event from being called the Mormon Olympics, they view this as an unprecedented opportunity to make the acquaintance of billions of prospective converts.

Mormonism, which entered the twentieth century as the most persecuted creed in America, begins the twenty-first century as perhaps the country's most robust religion. During the past thirty years, the number of its adherents in the United States has increased by nearly two hundred and twenty-five per cent, to more than five million. (In the same period, the ranks of Southern Baptists, the other fast-growing major denomination in the country, have swelled forty per cent, to sixteen million.) At the same time, the memberships of older, more mainstream denominations, such as Methodism and Episcopalianism, have sharply declined.

The number of Mormons throughout the world may soon equal that of Jews, and, indeed, many see a parallel between the two faiths. Harold Bloom, the Sterling Professor of the Humanities at Yale, who has written about Mormonism in his book "The American Religion," observes that "Mormons have repeated in a deep sense the pattern of the Jews—they are a religion

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT POLIDORI

*Portrait of Joseph Smith, above center, with his wife Emma and his brother Hyrum. Opposite: Salt Lake City's Temple Square.*



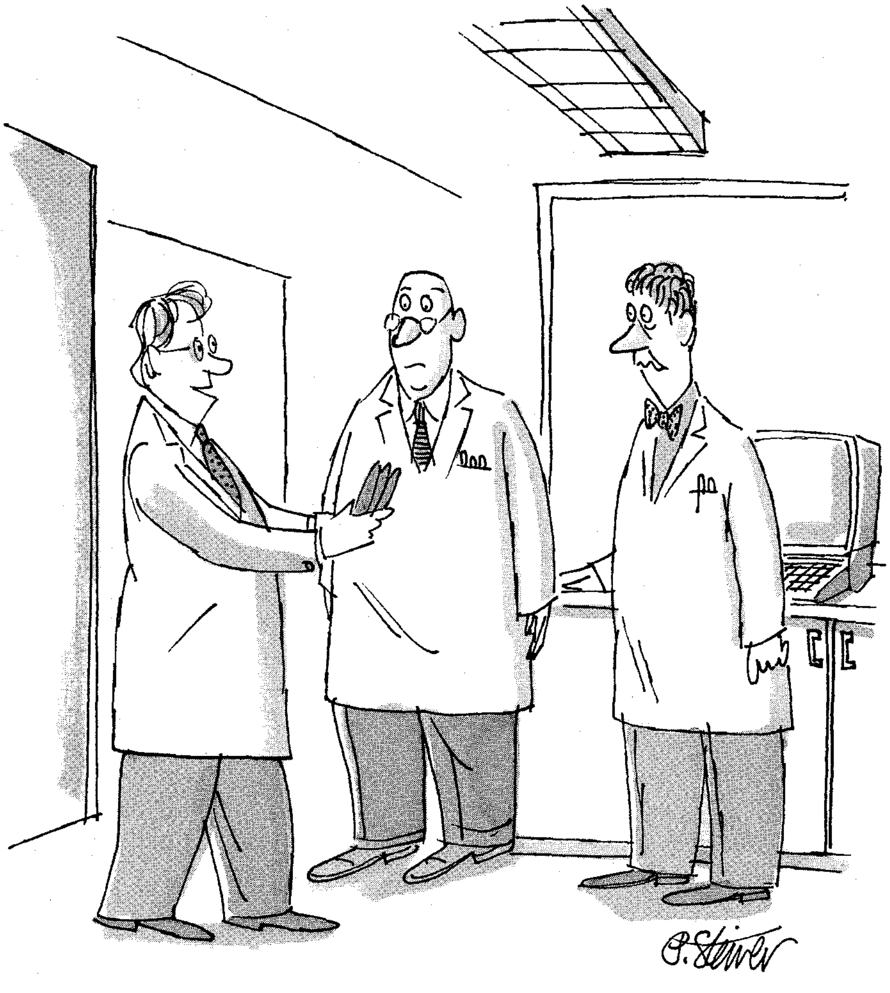
that has become a people." Like the Jews, the Mormons undertook an exodus that forged their early identity as a scorned people; and they believe that they are God's chosen. They divide the world's population between themselves and "gentiles"—a category that, for Mormons, includes Jews. Unlike the Jews, however, the Mormons are a missionary people, and the majority of them today are first-generation converts. Worldwide, according to the Church, the number of Mormons has grown by nearly four hundred per cent during the past thirty years, to more than eleven million. In "The American Religion," Bloom speculates about a time when American Mormons are so numerous and so wealthy "that governing our democracy becomes impossible without Mormon cooperation."

In 1847, Mormon pioneers followed Brigham Young across the Great Plains into what was then the northern extension of Mexico. They dreamed of creating their own theocratic empire, in a land they called Zion. That vision was eroded by the ceding of the Utah Territory to the United States in 1850, after the Mexican War, and by the subsequent admission of Utah as a state, in 1896. Yet it is striking how much of the dream has been achieved. Mormons constitute sixty-three per cent of Utah's population. (The figure includes nonpracticing Mormons.) Virtually all statewide elective offices, from the governor down, are held by Saints, as Mormons call themselves. The state legislature is overwhelmingly made up of white Mormon Republican males. Three-fourths of the state judiciary is Mormon. The entire United States congressional delegation from Utah is Mormon. School boards, city councils, municipal agencies, and mayors' offices are dominated by Mormons. "The fact is we live in a quasi theocracy," James E. Shelledy, the editor of the Salt Lake *Tribune*, told me. "Eighty per cent of officeholders are of a single party, ninety per cent of a single religion, ninety-nine per cent of a single race, and eighty-five per cent of one gender."

The major secular institutions in the state often have a parallel, Church-owned counterpart. There is the University of Utah (the "U") in Salt Lake City, and there is Brigham Young University (the "Y") in Provo, which is the largest religiously sponsored school in the country. The non-Mormon *Tribune* is the state's principal newspaper, but the second-largest one is the Church-affiliated *Deseret News*. Church affiliates also own the state's biggest television and AM radio stations. Most public junior high and high schools have a Mormon seminary available for religious study. The Mormon majority tends to perceive institutions that are not owned by the Church as anti-Mormon, especially in Salt Lake City, the only major city in Utah where Mormons are a minority (about forty-five per cent of the city's population). "This causes some cultural and religious divisions that are not present in the rest of Utah," Shelledy said. "It's frustrating for the non-Mormon majority in the city, because the cultural boundaries are already set, and there is little opportunity for their input." The city's energetic mayor, Rocky Anderson, a former Mormon who left the Church at the age of eighteen after what he said was "an intense period of self-examination," has made bridging the divide between non-Mormons and Mormons a priority of his administration. "I believe we'd have a far better community," he told me, "if people could break out of their isolation on both sides."

Saints compare their headquarters in Salt Lake City—an imposing complex of buildings set against the Wasatch Mountains—to the Vatican. Brigham Young, who founded Salt Lake City, mandated that streets be numbered according to their distance from the pale neo-Gothic granite temple that stands at the center. Young's regimented thoroughfares are a hundred and thirty-two feet wide—wide enough to turn around a train of oxen, he decreed—so there is a lot of high-desert sky between buildings. In this setting, the handsome state capitol nearby looks a bit captive.

Temple Square, the ten-acre heart of Mormonism, is a serene enclosure. The Tabernacle, home to the celebrated choir,



*"We just made a big cancer breakthrough. Have a cigar."*

stands in the middle of the complex, facing the multi-spired Temple. Simplicity is the sensibility at work in this cloister. Although Mormon temples are often impressive pieces of architecture, the icons and crucifixes and frescoes that adorn many Christian churches are notably absent here—as if decoration were an affront to the pragmatism that Mormons pride themselves upon. Even the occasional stained-glass window shies away from depictions of religious passion in favor of geometric patterns. Across North Temple Street is a new conference center, a million two hundred thousand square feet in size—nearly ten times as large as the old Tabernacle—which can seat more than twenty-one thousand people.

Salt Lake City is a pleasant town that is often ranked as one of America's best places to live; it's clean, has a low crime rate, and provides ready access to ski slopes and wilderness areas. The extremes of wealth and poverty that characterize most American cities are not evident in Salt Lake City, in part because of the Mormons' emphasis on frugality and charity.

Some Mormons regard the forthcoming Olympics as the fulfillment of a prophecy. "We shall build a city and a temple to the Most High God in this place," Young told his followers. "Kings and emperors and the noble and wise of the earth will visit us here, while the wicked and ungodly will envy us our comfortable homes and possessions." But the International Olympic Committee's choice of Salt Lake City for the 2002 Games was accompanied by less welcome news. First came the revelation that members of the Salt Lake Bid Committee had boosted its candidacy by dispensing more than a million dollars in cash and gifts to members of the I.O.C. The United States Attorney's office indicted two of the Salt Lake committee's leaders, David Johnson and Thomas Welch, both prominent members of the Church, on bribery and other charges. It was expected that their trial might implicate other leading members of the Mormon establishment, including Michael O. Leavitt, the governor of Utah. Last August, however, the federal judge in the case, David Sam, who is also a Mormon, threw out the key charges, calling them an "uninvited federal intrusion" into the state's affairs. Johnson and Welch faced additional charges of conspiracy and fraud, but the case was dismissed by Judge Sam last November. The federal government has appealed the decision.

In the meantime, the Church was obliged to revisit the most horrific episode in its history. In 1857, a wagon train of migrant families heading to California was massacred in southwest Utah. A hundred and twenty people were murdered in a grazing spot called Mountain Meadows. The Church had long denied any responsibility for the massacre, blaming a few renegade Mormons and a band of Paiute Indians, whom the Church accused of killing the women and children. In 1999, at the request of the descendants of the victims, the Church rebuilt a small monument at the site. The gesture became a public-relations disaster when construction workers discovered a number of bones that seemed to indicate that the women and children had been shot at close range, apparently by Mormons, rather than killed by the arrows, clubs, and knives of the Indians.

The traditional Mormon practice of polygamy, which the Church officially banned in 1890, also became a subject of renewed controversy when the *Tribune* published a series of articles about child abuse and welfare fraud in polygamous families. The articles revealed, among other things, that polygamous marriages were still flourishing in various parts of the state, and in greater numbers than ever. When Tom Green, a man with five wives and thirty children, flaunted his life style on talk shows—he was eventually tried and convicted on charges of bigamy and criminal non-support—the Church was obliged, once again, to try to come to terms with its most vexing legacy.

## THE LEADER

The president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a ninety-one-year-old man named Gordon B. Hinckley. I visited Hinckley in his spacious, sun-filled office in Temple Square, which is comfortably but plainly furnished. Hinckley's manner is more corporate than pastoral. He has a round face with a genial expression, and eyes that dance about smartly behind trifocals. Among his followers, his youthfulness and energy are legendary, as is his vinegary humor. "All writers should be put in a box and thrown in the sea," he said as he rose to greet me. Like every other man I had seen in the Temple complex, he was wearing a black suit, a white shirt, and a dark, narrow tie. His office was full of Americana and personal mementos: a bust of Lincoln; a portrait of the Church's founder, Joseph Smith; a photograph of Hinckley at the White House handing Ronald Reagan a set of Mormon scriptures; another of him with the talk-show host Larry King. On a shelf behind Hinckley's desk was a buffalo skull, an ancient coin that he described as a "widow's mite" ("to remind me of where the Church's money comes from"), and a slab of wood from a black-walnut tree he had planted more than thirty years ago, which was used for the pulpit in the new conference center. "I'm a farmer at heart," he said. "Never a spring has passed that I've not planted some trees."

Seated behind a massive wooden desk, which was covered with correspondence and reports, Hinckley told me, "I don't think the Church has changed so very much as the perception of the Church has changed." He has been instrumental in that shift, having modernized the Church's vigilant public-relations department, in the nineteen-thirties. As I placed my tape recorder on his desk, three smiling dark-suited men from the P.R. office placed tape recorders beside it.

Before assuming the top job, in 1995, Hinckley was the acknowledged power behind the throne. He is by no means the oldest man to lead the Church. David O. McKay led it from 1951 until his death, in 1970, at the age of ninety-six. McKay's successor, Joseph Fielding Smith, died at ninety-five. The Church is run by the Quorum of the Twelve, also known as the apostles, and by a three-man group known as the First Presidency. The longest-serving apostle ascends to the presidency upon the death of the leader. The system may help resolve disputes over succession, but it has also resulted in a gerontocracy whose leaders have sometimes been physically or mentally incapacitated. Hinckley, however, is constantly flying around the

THE VILLAGE SNOWIDIOT

globe, visiting missions, dedicating temples, writing books, giving speeches, and holding press conferences. He is widely regarded as the most accessible and capable leader the Church has had in decades.

"I'm the third generation in this Church," he told me. "My grandfather joined the Church in his late teens in Nauvoo." Nauvoo, Illinois, was a refuge that the Mormons created in 1839, following an order by the governor of Missouri to run them out of the state. But Illinois soon proved to be worse than Missouri. In 1844, after an anti-Mormon mob murdered Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, the Mormons headed west. Hinckley's grandfather Ira was among them. Thousands died on the trek across the Great Plains, including Ira's wife and his stepbrother, Joel, who both died of cholera on the same day in 1850.

Hinckley showed me a small bronze figure of a pioneer standing beside a grave. "Here's a little statue somebody made of that event, portraying my grandfather's burial of his wife in a coffin he made somewhere, we know not where. And afterward he picked up his eleven-month-old daughter and carried her to this valley." Hinckley's voice grew thick. "Now, that's my background in this Church, and it's real, and it's pragmatic, and it's Mormonism."

In the Mormon scheme, every person is a potential divinity. The adage "As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may be" expresses the Mormon belief that God was once a human being, with a wife and children. But Hinckley did not seem interested in discussing matters of theology. When I asked him to characterize God's connubial relationship, he replied, "We don't speculate on that a lot. Brigham Young said if you went to Heaven and saw God it would be Adam and Eve. I don't know what he meant by that." Pointing to a grim-faced portrait of the Lion of the Lord, as Young was called, he said, "There he is, right there. I'm not going to worry about what he said about those things."

I asked whether Mormon theology was a form of polytheism.

"I don't have the remotest idea what you mean," he said impatiently.

"More than one god."

"Yes, but that's a very loose term," he replied. "We believe in eternal progression." By that he meant that human beings can evolve toward godhood by following the Mormon path. "You want to be a reporter always?" he said. "You want to be a scrub forever, through all eternity? We believe that life, eternal life, is real, that it's purposeful, that it has meaning, that it can be realized. I wouldn't describe us as polytheistic."

I asked Hinckley what role the Church planned to take during the Olympics. There would be no proselytizing of visitors to the Games, he assured me. "We intend to be gracious hosts," he said. "We're not bad people, and we do things in a pretty decent way, when all is said and done." When I brought up the bribery scandal, his tone hardened. "I just regret very much that this has occurred, but the Church has not been a party to it in any sense whatsoever," he said. Of the two men under indictment, he said, "I don't keep track of every member," and added, "Certainly we believe in the concept of you're innocent until proven guilty."

As I was leaving, Hinckley cautioned me against speaking with the Church's many critics, who, he said, are not a part of the "life of the religion." He said, "I'm a living part of it. These men"—he indicated his public-relations officials—"are a living part of it. They know why this thing ticks. They know why this is the fastest-growing religious element in the United States and in the world, almost. They know why we're able to send out sixty thousand missionaries. They know why we can build meetinghouses all across the world, four hundred a year. It is an absolute miracle what this Church is doing."

## REVELATIONS IN GOLD

In 1820, in the little town of Manchester, New York, a fourteen-year-old named Joseph Smith had a visitation. It was a fertile and turbulent time in American religious history. Old beliefs were losing their influence, and new ones were arising that were more responsive to America's revivalist spirit. The upstate region where Smith was living was known as the "burnt-over district," because of the religious fevers that continually swept through it. One morning, Smith, who was trying to sort out the claims of truth that each denomination put forward, went into the woods to pray for guidance. He had no sooner knelt than he sensed the presence of a higher power, and felt himself surrounded by darkness. "Just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the Sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me," he wrote in a brief memoir. Out of the light stepped two "personages," hovering in the air, whom he took to be God and Jesus—"beings of substance, of form, and of personality," as Hinckley described them to me. Smith managed to ask these beings a question: Which of all the sects was right? "I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the personage who addressed me said that 'all their creeds were an abomination in his sight,' " he wrote. A moment later, he found himself lying on his back, gazing up at the empty sky. He went home and told his mother, "I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true."

Three years later, Smith had another visitation, this one from an angel, called Moroni, who revealed to him that an ancient book written on golden plates was buried nearby on a hill called Cumorah. Smith began making annual pilgrimages to Cumorah, waiting for a further sign. In 1827, he eloped with a young woman, Emma Hale. In September of that year, he returned to Cumorah and again he encountered Moroni. This time, the angel entrusted the golden plates to him, along with a pair of "seeing stones," called the Urim and Thummim, which permitted him to translate the strange language inscribed on the plates (identified by Smith as "reformed Egyptian").

In 1830, Smith published the five-hundred-and-eighty-eight-page Book of Mormon. It was prefaced by the statements of eleven witnesses who claimed to have seen the golden plates and, in eight cases, to have actually "hefted" them. The plates themselves, however, were no longer available for examination. With the "translation" finished, Moroni had reclaimed them and taken them back to Heaven.

The Book of Mormon purports to be the history of two tribes of Israel—the fair-skinned, virtuous Nephites and the dark-skinned, conniving Lamanites. The Nephites and the Lamanites battle for centuries, eventually carrying their feud into North America. In the midst of their warfare, the resurrected Jesus suddenly appears in the New World, demanding repentance. He teaches the Nephites the Lord's Prayer and delivers a discourse similar to the Sermon on the Mount. The two tribes are temporarily reconciled. But, four hundred years later, the Nephite leader Mormon is slain, with hundreds of thousands of his people, in the final triumph of the Lamanites. Mormon's son, Moroni, survives to record this last event on the golden plates, which are then buried on Cumorah.

Written in a florid style—Mark Twain called it "chloroform in print"—the narrative was compelling to many who read it, and even to many who only heard about it. The idea of a new, home-grown faith that posited the divinity of the individual struck a chord in a young country whose settlers believed, in Harold Bloom's words, that they were "mortal gods, destined to find themselves again in worlds as yet undiscovered." In Smith's vision, the New World became the new Holy Land, and he located the Garden of Eden near Independence, Missouri, close to the center of the continent.

By the time he was in his mid-twenties, Smith had become one of the most controversial men in America. Tall and fair, with a slight limp from a childhood operation, and sharp, rather feminine features that contrasted with a powerful build, he was a fascinating figure. The Book of Mormon, along with continuing revelations reported by the young prophet, formed the basis of a new faith. From the beginning, it was a missionary creed, and Smith sent emissaries throughout America and abroad. Thousands of followers were drawn to his ministry, including Brigham Young, a young carpenter in upstate New York, who became one of the greatest colonizers of the West. The Mormons, at first derided as cranks, were soon objects of fear and hatred, not just because of their heretical beliefs but also because of their communal economy, their monolithic politics, and, eventually, their practice of polygamy. In the nine years that remained in his brief life, Smith and his disciples were driven from one settlement after another, in what was an unparalleled assault of religious persecution in America. The epic migration of Smith's followers to Utah produced a people who were at once self-reliant and wary—"a sociological island of fanatic believers dedicated to a creed that the rest of America thought either vicious or mad," the novelist Wallace Stegner, an admirer, wrote of them.

In 1857, ten years after their arrival in Salt Lake City, the Mormons found themselves on the verge of war with the United States. A column of federal soldiers was advancing on the Utah Territory to unseat Brigham Young, the area's defiant and dictatorial governor. Young declared martial law and prepared his followers to burn down their homes and retreat to the mountains for guerrilla warfare. Meanwhile, a wagon train consisting of thirty well-to-do families, mostly from Arkansas, and a large herd of cattle, horses, and oxen entered Utah on the way to California. The Mormons viewed the newcomers with hostility, partly because of the recent news that

*"We've been thinking a lot about what we want to do with your life."*

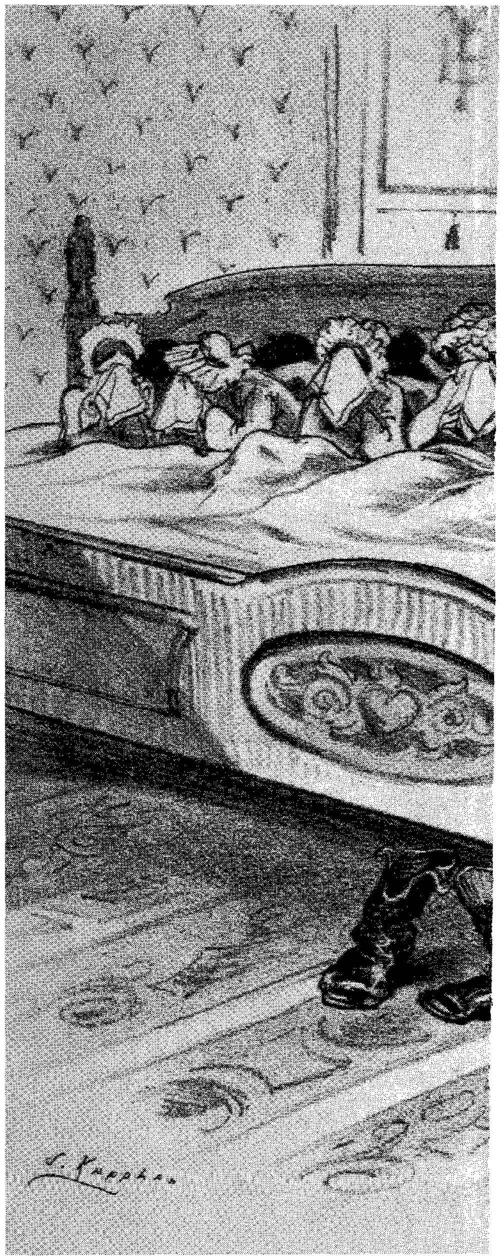
one of the Church's apostles, Parley Pratt, had been murdered in Arkansas. Despite calls by some Church leaders for revenge, the wagon train was able to traverse nearly the entire state without serious incident, until they reached Mountain Meadows.

The events that led to the massacre have been a subject of historical dispute for nearly a hundred and fifty years. Mark Twain accused Brigham Young of ordering the killings. The Mormon historians James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, in the official history of the movement, "The Story of the Latter-day Saints," exonerate Church leaders and attribute the slaughter to "a band of Indians and a few ill-informed and overzealous settlers." According to the jailhouse confession of John D. Lee, who was an adopted son of Brigham Young and who was later executed by the government for his part in the incident, a band of Paiute Indians, three to four hundred strong, took the initiative, attacking the wagon train and then harrying it for four days. In Lee's account, the standoff was finally broken when he approached the wagons at the head of a squad of Mormon militia under a flag of truce and laid out what he said were the Indians' terms for surrender. The besieged families agreed to put down their arms in return for safe escort to Cedar City, about thirty-five miles away. Once disarmed, the men marched single file behind the women and children and the wagons bearing infants and the wounded. At a prearranged signal, the Mormons turned on the male captives and shot them all, leaving the women and children for the Paiutes to kill with knives and hatchets. In the end, only seventeen were spared, all of them children. Twain believed that the "Indians" involved were actually Mormons wearing war paint, which conforms to accounts given by surviving children.

News of the massacre prompted members of Congress to call for the elimination of the Church. A lurid report to Congress written by a United States Army officer, Brevet Major James H. Carleton, who arrived on the scene a year and a half later to bury the remains, further inflamed national feeling against Mormons. "The scene of the massacre, even at this late day, was horrible to look upon," Carleton wrote. "Women's hair, in detached locks and masses, hung to the sage bushes and was strewn over the ground in many places. Parts of little children's dresses and of female costume dangled from the shrubbery or lay scattered about; and among these, here and there, on every hand, for at least a mile in the direction of the road, by two miles east and west, there gleamed, bleached white by the weather, the skulls and other bones of those who had suffered."

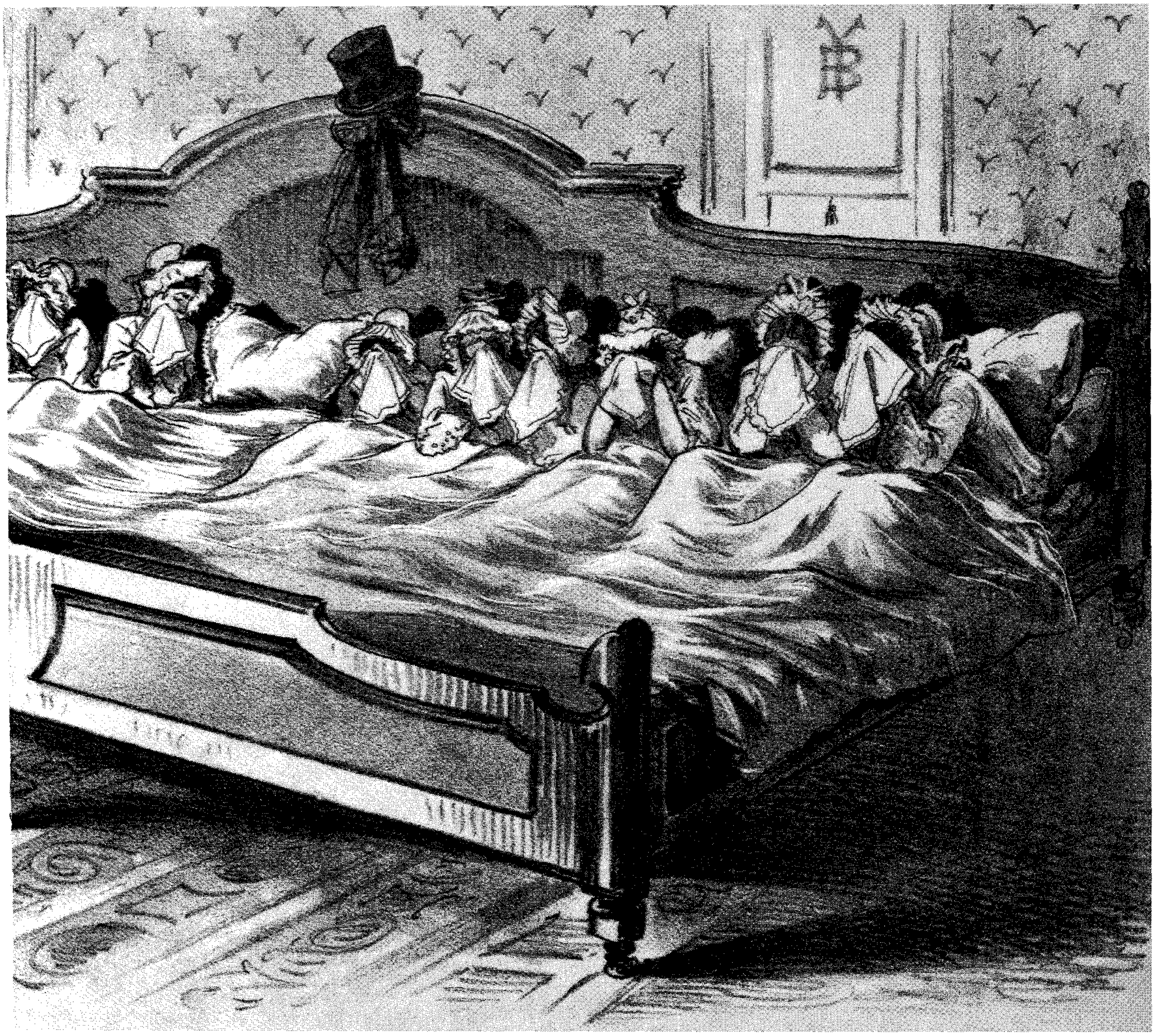
Brigham Young managed to forestall a federal investigation into the massacre by agreeing to step down as the territorial governor. It now seems likely that Lee was made a scapegoat to appease public opinion and the forces in Congress opposed to Utah's bid for statehood. A *Tribune* columnist named Will Bagley, who is writing a book about the massacre, has found contemporary diaries which he believes demonstrate that Young ordered the killings and supervised a coverup.

For the Church, the execution of Lee put the incident to rest, until the construction workers came upon the bones of the victims two years ago. The practice of polygamy proved to be a bigger burden, which kept alive the hostility of Victorian America toward the sect. Writers such as Twain and Arthur Conan Doyle described the Mormons in terms similar to those the press uses to describe the Taliban today. Curiously, the Book of Mormon is replete with denunciations of plural marriage, as the arrangement is often called. Indeed, throughout Smith's life monogamy was the official doctrine of the Church. He himself, however, seems to have been a compulsive philanderer, and rumors circulated about his multiple "marriages." "What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can find only one," he said in 1844, but by then it was known that he had taken more than thirty wives, and perhaps twice that many, with whom he "sealed" himself in secret ceremonies, "for time and all eternity." Some of the brides may have been as young as fourteen, and at least eleven of them were already married to close associates. Some he married after dispatching their husbands to the mission fields. A definitive tally of Smith's wives may never be established, but it is clear that in the last years of his life he was in a kind of marital frenzy, taking an average of one new wife per month, at the same time that he was building a spiritual and temporal empire, fielding his own army, and announcing his candidacy for President of the United States.



*An 1877 cartoon marking the death that year o*

Emma Smith denied that her husband had made multiple marriages, even though she is reported to have chased one of Joseph's wives out of the house. Urged by his brother Hyrum to seek divine guidance concerning plural marriage, Smith produced a revelation in July, 1843: "I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide



*righam Young, who led the Mormons west; Young had perhaps fifty-five wives. The Church officially renounced polygamy in 1890.*

JOSEPH KEPPLER/CORBIS

not that covenant, then are ye damned," the Lord warns. He goes on to say that "if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent," it is not adultery in God's eyes, even "if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law." God then addresses the beleaguered Emma by name: "And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed."

Evidently cowed by this injunction, Emma kept her peace. Meanwhile, some members of the inner circle were appalled at Smith's behavior and told him so. William Law, a Nauvoo businessman, begged his leader to abandon his polygamous ways. Smith responded by excommunicating Law and his brother. The Laws then set up a paper called the Nauvoo *Expositor*, which published an exposé of multiple marriages within the Mormon hierarchy. Smith, who was the mayor of Nauvoo—at that time one of the largest settlements in Illinois—convened a town-council meeting, in which it was resolved that the *Expositor* was a public nuisance and must be shut down.

The governor of Illinois, Thomas Ford, called Smith's conduct "a very gross outrage" and said that he should stand trial. Smith thought of fleeing, but eventually he and Hyrum turned themselves in at a jail in the non-Mormon town of Carthage. A mob burst past the nonresisting jailers and shot the Smiths in a second-floor bedroom. According to a witness, Smith uttered his last words—"Oh, Lord, my God"—as he fell from the window onto the street. There he was propped up against a well and shot again by a four-man firing squad.

Smith's death did not bring an end to polygamy. In 1866, Brigham Young declared, "The only men who become gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy." He set an example by marrying perhaps fifty-five women, an aspect of his life that is ignored in an official church biography, published in 1997. Throughout the nineteenth century, it was popularly assumed that Mormon women were little more than sex slaves, even though the women occasionally pointed out that they had chosen polygamous marriages. Moreover, Young encouraged women to take up the professions of law and medicine, and, as governor, he allowed them to vote, long before women elsewhere in the United States enjoyed such privileges.

In the nineteenth century, more than a thousand Mormon men went to prison for polygamy-related offenses, and many families fled to Canada and Mexico. In 1890, the United States Supreme Court sanctioned the nationwide confiscation of virtually all Mormon property, essentially authorizing that the movement be crushed. That year, the Church's president, Wilford Woodruff, received a revelation that inspired him to declare, in what is called the 1890 Manifesto, that plural marriage was no longer officially allowed. As Gordon Hinckley told me, "Polygamy came by revelation, and it left by revelation."

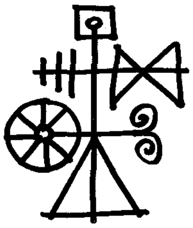
## A BEEHIVE

A paradox of Mormonism is that a faith with such an embattled history has fostered a community whose members are ostensibly so conventional. Mormons have managed to make themselves into an ethnic group without any of the usual markers of ethnicity—no distinctive language or accent, no special foods or music.

Mormons think of themselves as a people chosen by God to lead the rest of humanity to salvation. Submission to authority is an essential part of the religion. Mormons aim at being what they call themselves: saints. Charity, integrity, decency, courtesy, and clean living are the fundamental ingredients of the Mormon personality. Thanks in part to the Church's efforts to promote an image of worldly success, Mormons also think of themselves as being unusually industrious—"perhaps the most work-addicted culture in religious history," Harold Bloom says. Stephen Covey, a management consultant and the author of "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," who is descended on both sides from Mormon pioneers, told me, "There is a heavy emphasis in Mormonism on initiative, on responsibility, on a work ethic, and on education. If you take those elements together with a free-enterprise system, you've got the chemistry for a lot of industry." The symbol of the state of Utah is a beehive.

By far the most successful Mormon business venture is the Church itself. Among its largest holdings are the Beneficial Life Insurance Company, which has more than two billion dollars in assets, and the Bonneville International Corporation, a media company with eighteen radio stations concentrated in Chicago, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C. The Church reportedly owns more than a million acres of land in the continental United States (the equivalent of the state of Delaware), on which it operates more than a hundred and fifty ranches, farms, and orchards. It runs the largest cattle ranch in the United States, Deseret Cattle & Citrus, near Orlando, Florida. Although the Church is secretive about its empire, *Time* surveyed its assets in 1997 and calculated its net worth at a minimum of thirty billion dollars and its annual income at about six billion dollars, which, if it were a corporation, would place it in the middle of the Fortune 500 list. (In a letter to *Time*, the Church said that the figures were "greatly exaggerated.")

Saints are required to tithe in order to attend temple. They also fast one Sunday a month and give the money they would have spent for food to those in greater need. "We ask, in effect, between fourteen and fifteen per cent of people's income, including tithing and other things," one of the governing apostles, Neal A. Maxwell, told me. "We are equally demanding of time." In many respects, being a Mormon is like holding down a second job. Saints are routinely called upon to spend a Saturday making cheese in the storehouse of the local bishop or to take a year off from their regular job to work as a guide at one of the many Mormon historical sites. The Church runs one of the largest private welfare operations in the country, producing everything from granola to detergent under its own brand names. Almost all these goods are made by volunteers. "The practice goes back to the thirties, when Church leaders were worried as much about idleness as about the lack of resources," Harold Brown, the managing director of L.D.S. Welfare Services, told me. "We typically try to take care of our own. We believe the poor will be better blessed if they do as described in our doctrine: specifically, they should work for what they receive. The bishop may suggest that you help a widow down the street who has a yard she needs weeded. You can receive according to your need, but you are expected to work according to your ability."



Underlying Mormonism's cultivation of middle-class normality and hardheaded pragmatism is a deep core of mysticism. When Mormon children come of age, they are taken to a patriarch in the Church, who bestows a blessing that foretells their future. These prophecies are kept on file in the Church archives. At the age of eleven, Gordon Hinckley received a blessing: "Thou shalt grow to the full stature of manhood and shall become a mighty and valiant leader in the midst of Israel. . . . The nations of the earth shall hear thy voice and be brought to a knowledge of the truth by the wonderful testimony which thou shalt bear." Mormons are taught to pray for a "testimony" whenever they encounter doubts about the truth of their religion, and they look for guidance to their president, whom they also call a "prophet," "seer," and "revelator," because he is assumed to be in direct communication with God. "We believe in the principle of continuous revelation," Hinckley told me. "To me, it's so perfectly clear and understandable that the God who revealed himself in the comparatively simple days of the Old West would not fail to reveal himself in the very complex times in which we now live."

When I asked him to describe his own revelations, Hinckley demurred. "They're very sacred to me. They're the kind of things you don't want to put before the world," he said. But he added, "There's no doubt in my mind we've experienced a tremendous undertaking in the building of temples across the world, having just dedicated the hundred-and-second working temple of the Church. I believe the inspiration to move that work forward came from the Almighty."

Sunday-morning worship takes place in ward houses—the Mormon equivalent of neighborhood churches—and anyone is welcome to attend. A ward is part of a larger "stake," which is akin to a diocese. There is no separate clergy in Mormonism, and the officers are drawn from the membership. During worship, all Saints, including children, are called upon to give testimony in affirmation of their faith. All Mormon males can become "priests" at the age of sixteen, and when they become missionaries they graduate to the higher order of "elders." Only Mormons who have been approved by the bishop of their ward and the president of their stake are allowed to enter a temple. During Hinckley's tenure, temple attendance has increasingly come to define a good Mormon. It is in the temples that weddings and sacred rituals, such as the Baptism for the Dead, take place.

BAD DOG!
CHENEY

Mormons believe that the dead can achieve salvation through proxy baptisms, and this accounts for their keen interest in genealogy. If dead souls accept the invitation to become Latter-day Saints, they can be united with their families in the hereafter. "Baptism for the Dead is one of the most appealing doctrines there is," Stephen Covey told me. "How can you possibly reconcile the justice of God with the idea that only through Christ can you be saved? Most of the world lives and dies and never even hears of Christ. There has to be some mechanism set up for all those who have ever lived to have an opportunity to hear of Christ." In practice, teenagers line up in the temple to be baptized as proxies for dead people whose names appear on a computer screen. "We also have people who are called 'extraction missionaries,' " Elbert Peck, the former editor and publisher of the Mormon intellectual magazine *Sunstone*, told me. "They basically go to their little stake center and sit down at a microfilm machine and take these names and put them into our computer database." According to Richard E. Turley, Jr., the managing director of the Family and Church History Department, in Salt Lake City, as many as two hundred million dead people have been baptized as Mormons, including Buddha and all the popes, Shakespeare, Einstein, and Elvis Presley—what Peck dismissively calls "celebrity work for the dead." In the early nineties, some Mormons were moved to baptize victims of the Holocaust. The practice caused a great deal of friction with Jewish genealogists, who now monitor Mormon baptismal lists to make sure that Jews are not included.

The most distinctive badge of Mormonism is the sacred garment that adults are supposed to wear under their clothes at all times. In the early days of the Church, sacred garments resembled long underwear, but they have changed to accommodate modern styles. At some point early in the twentieth century, the undergarments were modified into "a kind of Calvin Klein jumpsuit sort of thing," as one historian describes it. Now short-sleeved two-piece garments are commonly worn, but they are still cut in a fashion sufficiently distinctive so that it's possible to spot a Mormon by the lines under his or her clothing. (Non-Mormon lawyers have been known to wear similar undergarments in an attempt to influence Mormon juries.) There is considerable folklore about the protective powers of the garments—stories about people whose underwear enabled them to survive wars or car wrecks. In 1977, a Wyoming beauty queen, Joyce McKinney, kidnapped a twenty-one-year-old Mormon missionary and handcuffed him to her bed in an attempt to become pregnant. His garments, he later said, kept him chaste. The garments lend themselves to such magical interpretations because they are discreetly embroidered with symbols derived from Freemasonry. "Most Mormons would say that the garments are a spiritual protection and a shield," Peck told me. "They remind us of our covenants, which keep us safe and clean and pure from the world."

Mormons think of themselves, in a larger sense, as Christians. They take

CHALK
ALEX
ELI
FRIDA
MADDIE
CHARLES
JACOB
BEN
RYANNE

*"It's over, Rachel—I want your things out of my cubby."*

• •

Communion (usually Wonder bread and water); they celebrate Christmas and Easter. They regard the Bible as sacred but incomplete; the Book of Mormon, they say, is "another testament of Jesus Christ." To some other Christian denominations, however, Mormonism is essentially an overgrown cult. The Southern Baptists, who often find themselves on the side of the Saints in their campaigns against such issues as abortion and gay rights, have called Mormonism "counterfeit Christianity." Even the more accommodating Presbyterians have condemned Mormonism as a polytheistic heresy. "That just hurts us to the core," Peck told me. "To say we're not Christians—oh, that just makes us cry."

## SOLDIERS OF THE FAITH

Salt Lake City is the official headquarters of the Church, but the spiritual home of the religion is in Provo, the site of Brigham Young University and of the Church's Missionary Training Center. Provo is the West Point of Mormonism; it is where the leaders of the Church are made.

On the day that I visited the M.T.C., a number of Mormon families were dropping off their children, nearly all of them teen-age boys in dark suits and narrow ties. Women can volunteer for missionary work at the age of twenty-one, but all young Mormon men are encouraged to give two years of their lives to the mission fields. From the moment they arrive at the Provo center, or at one of fourteen other missionary-training facilities around the world, until the day they return home, they are subject to rigorous strictures on their behavior. They cannot call home except on Mother's Day and Christmas, and can write letters only once a week. No dating. No television or radio. As I watched parents saying goodbye to their sons, Church officials circulated among them, passing out tissues.

More than half the missionaries are sent abroad, and fifty languages are taught at the M.T.C. When they arrive at their destination, they are expected to spend six days a week knocking on doors and presenting prepared lectures on Joseph Smith and the Mormon message. Two years ago, sixty thousand missionaries signed up two hundred and seventy-four thousand converts worldwide—an average of fewer than five converts per missionary. "You tend to internalize the values," Ronald W. Walker, a professor of history at B.Y.U., who served his mission in Georgia and Alabama, said to me. "The kids go out and may convert a few here and there, but, more important, they convert themselves."

The experience of having doors closed in one's face day after day leaves a lasting impression. "It's funny how people who served as missionaries often say it was the most difficult two years of their lives, and also the best," Mitt Romney, the head of the organizing committee for the Salt Lake City Olympics, told me. Romney served his mission in Paris and Bordeaux. He is the scion of one of the most famous Mormon political families; his father, George Romney, was the Republican governor of Michigan for three terms beginning in 1962, and a Presidential aspirant in 1968. "As you can imagine, it's quite an experience to go to Bordeaux and say, 'Give up your wine! I've got a great religion for you!' " he said. "It was good training for how life works. I mean, rejection of one kind or another is going to be an important part of everyone's life. Here I'd grown up as the son of a governor, from a wealthy home. No one had asked me about my religion, or cared, and now I was on the street, lower than a Fuller Brush salesman, in a place where Americans were not particularly liked, where I couldn't speak the language very well, and where selling religion, particularly Mormonism, was going to be very painful."

Romney, who was tapped by Governor Leavitt to take over the Games after the bid scandal, is a successful venture capitalist in Boston and a centrist Republican who ran a strong Senate race against Edward M. Kennedy in 1994. A tall, distinguished-looking man with his father's lantern jaw, he has proved to be a capable but controversial choice for the Olympics job. Non-Mormons, along with Church members who were worried about the appearance of cronyism, criticized Romney's appointment as an invitation for the world to view the Winter Games as the Mormon Olympics. James Shelledy, the Salt Lake *Tribune* editor, said to me, "The Governor conducted an exhaustive forty-eight-hour search for the best B.Y.U. graduate available."

In the ideal Mormon world, the youthful missionaries return to Provo after their service to attend B.Y.U. and to find a mate. The concentration of missionaries, students, and young families has made Provo the youngest city in America. It is beautifully situated, on the western slope of the Wasatch Mountains, but it lacks the usual bars and coffeehouses, the slouchy funkiness of a college town.

A powerful denominator of Mormonness in Provo is Diet Coke. Joseph Smith included the consumption of "hot drinks" in his list of vices that Mormons should avoid, along with alcohol and tobacco; as a result, coffee and tea are forbidden on campus. Soft drinks, however, pose a theological puzzle. Some Mormons believe that the injunction against hot drinks should include any beverage with caffeine. President Hinckley said as much on the Larry King show a few years ago, alarming many members of the faith who had grown accustomed to taking their caffeine cold. The Diet Coke advocates pointed out that the president's statement was not issued as a divine revelation, so there was still no official ruling on the matter, but caffeinated soft drinks disappeared from campus. Recently, however, the university has been embroiled in a dispute over whether the student paper should accept ads even for decaffeinated Diet Coke, which is seen as a dangerous substitute—like candy cigarettes. In the religion department at B.Y.U., I found only one professor who admitted to being a Diet Coker, but later that afternoon I joined members of the sociology department as, plastic mugs in hand, they headed for an off-campus convenience store.

During that outing, Tim Heaton, a professor of demographics, explained the "four 'C's" that distinguish Mormons from other Americans: chastity, conjugality, chauvinism, and children. A premium is placed on sexual purity, and Church studies show that among Mormon high-school seniors only ten per cent of boys and eighteen per cent of girls say that they have had sexual relations—respectively seven times and three times lower than comparable national figures. "Mormons are more likely to marry in their early twenties, whereas the national average is around twenty-six or twenty-seven," Heaton said. Family violence is at about the national average, but there is a marked difference in attitude about parental roles, with Mormons inclining toward more traditional ideas about the father as the head of the household and the mother not working outside the home. The Mormon birth rate is about fifty per cent higher than the national average.

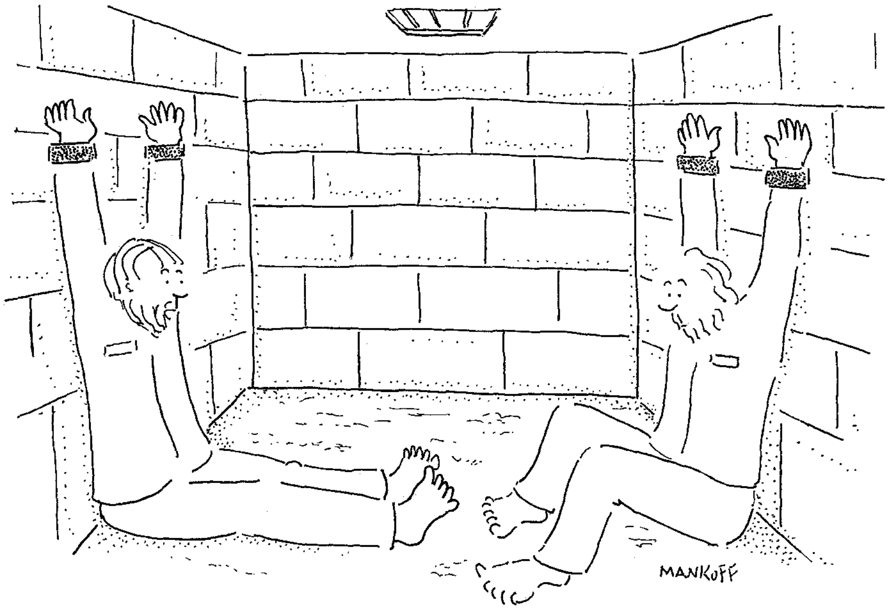
Utah has been called the land of milk and cookies, because of the vast consumption of these products (although Jell-O was recently voted the official state snack food). Perhaps because of the Mormons' lower consumption of alcohol and tobacco, their life spans are as much as eleven years longer than the American average. (Only the largely vegetarian Seventh-Day Adventists live longer.) On the other hand, Utah reportedly leads the nation in the use of antidepressants; Prozac prescriptions, for instance, are about sixty per cent above the national average. Death rates from cancer and heart disease are lower than in the rest of the country, but diabetes is higher. "Sugar is our great vice," Heaton said.

## SECRETS OF THE MUMMIES

At Brigham Young, the study of religion is divided into Ancient Scripture—which includes the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and other Mormon texts—and Church History and Doctrine. These departments are housed in the handsome Joseph Smith Building. In an atrium, behind a pane of glass, is a statue of the ecstatic teen-age founder receiving his vision in the grove. It is one of the few pieces of permanent art on campus. When the university's art museum sponsored a travelling exhibition of Rodin a few years ago, "The Kiss" was hidden away in a basement.

I was curious why people who are so outgoing and capable would choose a faith that imposed such restrictions on their lives. I spoke to Robert Millet, a former dean of religious education at B.Y.U., and asked him if there was anything about Mormonism that he had difficulty accepting. "I think each of us would have our unresolved issues," he said. "For example, I doubt that any of us have all the answers on issues like plural marriage. We have what we call some 'shelf doctrines'—things we put aside for the time being. But being a Mormon is really a matter of faith, in that we accept the historicity of Smith's first vision—the angel, the plates, and so on—and go from there."

When I noted that Smith's veracity about the revelations might be questionable, given that he had lied about his polygamy, Millet replied, "The issue for us is do we apply the same kind of standards to the Bible and Biblical figures as we do to the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith. Clearly, the Christian faith is dependent upon acceptance of a divine miracle that took place on Easter morning, for which there is no evidence. Would you do a similar critique of Abraham, who, presumably, lied here and there? Or of Jacob, who took more than one wife? I mean, if you were a believer, you'd come at this from the perspective



*"Look, you've got to accept some curtailment of your freedom in exchange for increased security."*

that the Lord is behind all this, and the deception, if there be any, is by design."

Across the campus from the Smith Building is a small house where the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies has its quarters. It is a controversial organization even among Mormons. The aim of the foundation is to demonstrate the historical truth of the Book of Mormon and other documents that Smith produced. Here I met with several professors, including Hugh Nibley, who is the most venerable figure in Mormon scholarship, although he is little known outside it. At the age of ninety-one, he was at work on his "fourteenth or fifteenth" book.

The Book of Mormon poses formidable problems for scholars. After many decades of research, not a single person or place named in it has been shown to exist. If Nephite civilization once covered the continent, where are the ruins? Nowhere in North America is there evidence of an ancient civilization that had, as Smith describes it, wheeled transportation or the capacity to make steel weapons, or a written language that corresponded to Egyptian. "People underestimate the capacity of things to disappear," Nibley wrote in 1957. Nor has DNA testing supported the Mormon belief that the Lamanites—supposedly a Semitic race—are the ancestors of Native Americans.

"Well, if it was all pure fiction, who on earth had ever done anything like that?" Nibley said with some asperity. "This is the history of a civilization, with all its ramifications having to do with plagues and wars. The military passages are flawless. Could you please tell me any other book like that?"

Even more troubling for Mormon scholars is a document called the Book

*A sculpture of Adam and Eve in Temple Square's visitors' center. In Smith's vision, the New World became the Holy Land; he located t* of Abraham. In 1835, Joseph Smith, who was then living in Kirtland, Ohio, bought a wagonful of Egyptian mummies from a man named Michael Chandler. Inside two of the mummy cases, wrapped in linen, were scrolls of papyrus covered with hieroglyphs. Smith gave the mummies to his mother, who charged visitors a quarter to see them. Meanwhile, he undertook a translation of the scrolls. Before long, he was telling fellow-Mormons that the scrolls contained the writings of two Old Testament patriarchs, Abraham and Joseph.

In 1842, Smith published the Book of Abraham. It purports to be an unfinished fragment of Abraham's autobiography, the very material from which the Book of Genesis was drawn. At the time that Chandler visited Kirtland, no scholar in America believed that it was possible to translate hieroglyphs; news had not yet reached America of the discovery of the Rosetta stone or of Champollion's success at rendering the hieroglyphic language into French. The Book of Abraham is disconcerting, not only because its dubious authenticity reflects on Smith and the Book of Mormon but also because of what it actually says.

*rden of Eden near Independence, Missouri.*

The book describes a multiplicity of gods and posits the preëxistence of souls, and also delves into the subject of race. Pharaoh, Abraham says, was descended from Ham, whose line was cursed with black skin, and for that reason "he could not have the right of Priesthood." On the basis of this statement, the Church denied priesthood to black members until 1978.

After Smith's death, the papyri were sold to a collector, and for many years it was thought that they had ended up in the Wood Museum, in Chicago, which was destroyed in the great fire of 1871. Then, in 1966, a retired professor of Middle Eastern studies from the University of Utah, Aziz S. Atiya, who was doing research at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, decided to take a closer look at some fragments of papyri in one of the document cases. He said he realized at once that he had found the original scrolls for Smith's Book of Abraham. (Museum officials maintained they knew that the papyri had belonged to Smith, and said they granted Atiya access to them in the hope that he would convey them to the Church.) When the Church showed the documents to four distinguished Egyptologists, however, each of them came to the same conclusion: the papyri were ordinary Egyptian funerary documents and had nothing at all to do with Abraham.

This disclosure brought forth various defenses by Nibley and other Mormon scholars, who said, in effect, that not all the papyri had been recovered. They proposed that the Book of Abraham was more an inspired reading than an actual translation, but the fact that Smith had also produced a "grammar" of the Egyptian language weakened the theory. Gradually, the protests died down, largely, perhaps, because few members actually resigned from the Church over the issue. Today, even Nibley seems weary of the effort to authenticate the Book of Abraham. In his view, the controversy is of a piece with the entire Judeo-Christian tradition. "Very few scholars even believe that Abraham ever lived," Nibley said.

## AN ABUNDANCE OF WIVES

Mormons who condemn the legacy of polygamy tend to speak openly and sympathetically about it as a practice that was part of their ancestors' trials of faith and survival. "Among my great-grandparents, we had at least two who were polygamous," Mitt Romney told me. One of them, a woman named Hannah Hood Hill, wrote a memoir in which she described the difficulty of sharing her husband with another woman. "She talks about how she and her husband wept together when he was asked by Brigham Young to marry another woman," Romney said. "My great-grandmother prepared a room for this new wife and knitted her a rag rug. Brigham Young ultimately asked him to take five additional wives. It was the great trial of the early Mormon pioneers." Romney told me that when his father ran for President his friends kidded him that there wouldn't be enough room in the White House for a family gathering. "My dad had something like two hundred and thirty-two first cousins," Romney said.

Although Romney, like other Mormons, defends the practice of polygamy in the early days of the Church by pointing to a surplus of women in Utah, census reports for the time show roughly equal numbers of men and women. Church leaders were told to take multiple wives and "live the principle." In religions where polygamy is still practiced—for example, in Islam—the number of wives is usually a reflection of the husband's wealth; the currency behind Mormon polygamy, however, seems to have been spiritual. Only men are given the priesthood power of salvation, and through them women gain access to the celestial kingdom. Faithful women were naturally drawn to men who they believed could guarantee eternal life; in fact, Brigham Young authorized women to leave their husbands if they could find a man "with higher power and authority" than their present husband. Apparently, many of them did, as shown by the rate of divorce at the time.

After the 1890 Manifesto officially ended plural marriage, thousands of Mormons in good standing, including a number of apostles, continued to marry multiple wives in secret. When Congress demanded that furtive polygamists be rooted out, Joseph F. Smith, who was a nephew of the founder and became president of the Church, issued a Second Manifesto, in 1906, in which he declared that anyone who participated in the practice would be excommunicated. Nonetheless, Smith himself continued to perform secret plural marriages. In 1933, the Church's president, Heber J. Grant, began a determined policy to eradicate polygamy altogether.

Today, the Church regards anyone living in polygamy as no longer a Mormon. Those who do live in plural marriages often call themselves "fundamentalist" Mormons. Their number is a matter of speculation, since polygamists are generally reluctant to identify themselves. It is estimated that there are between forty thousand and a hundred thousand people living in polygamous situations in Utah, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, and California. In the Salt Lake City area, the Allred clan is said to have more than three thousand members. Another well-known Salt Lake clan, the Kingston family, is thought to include about two thousand people. The Kingstons reputedly favor intermarriage between near relatives, in order to keep their line pure.

There are also uncounted numbers of "independents." Some of them live in trailer parks and wear long-sleeved shirts and old-fashioned dresses, conforming to the stereotype of zealots who reject the modern world and its trappings. The majority of them mingle easily in commerce and society. The Kingston patriarchs do so in a Lear jet.

Owen Allred, the eighty-seven-year-old patriarch of the Apostolic United Brethren, a fundamentalist order of Mormons, lives in the semirural community of Bluffdale, south of Salt Lake City. "I proposed to one woman when I was twenty-three, and she's been mine for sixty-five years," he told me. "I've never proposed to another, and I've got eight living wives."

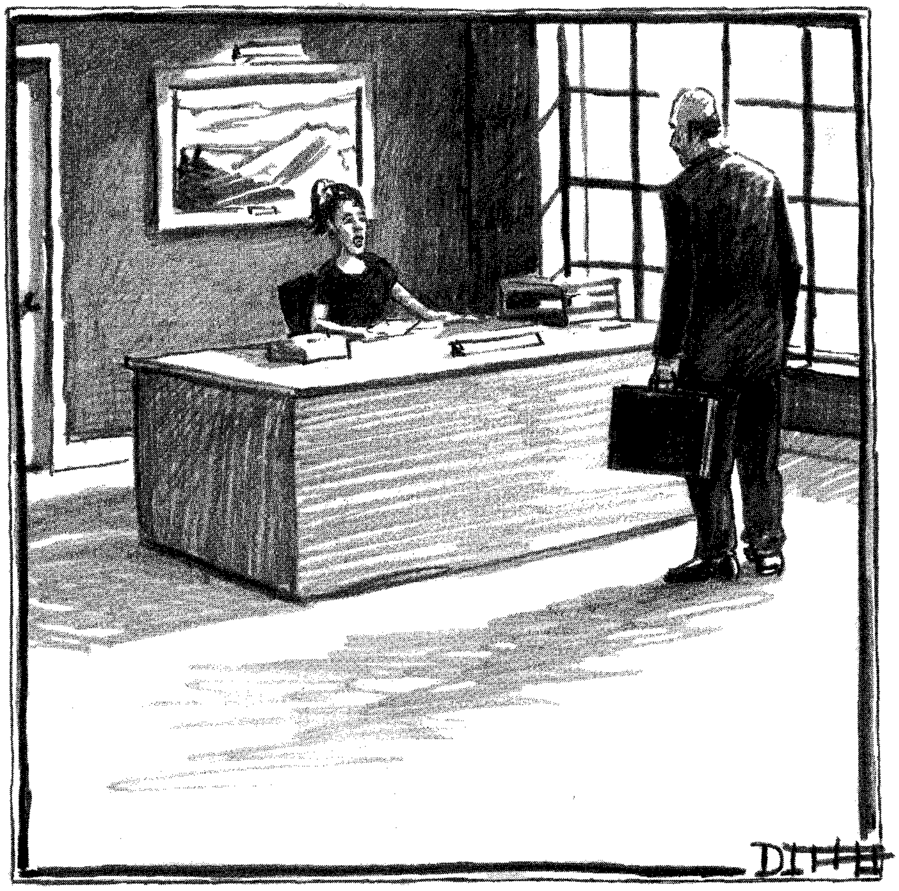
"So they proposed to you?" I asked.

Allred nodded. "See that home over there?" he said. "That one, this one, and the two more along the way belong to the wife that lives in it." Allred claims twenty-three children and two hundred and six grandchildren. "I love those kids," he said. "A lot of times their mothers will say, 'Leave Grandpa alone,' and I say, 'No! Let them come to me.' Precious little darlings."

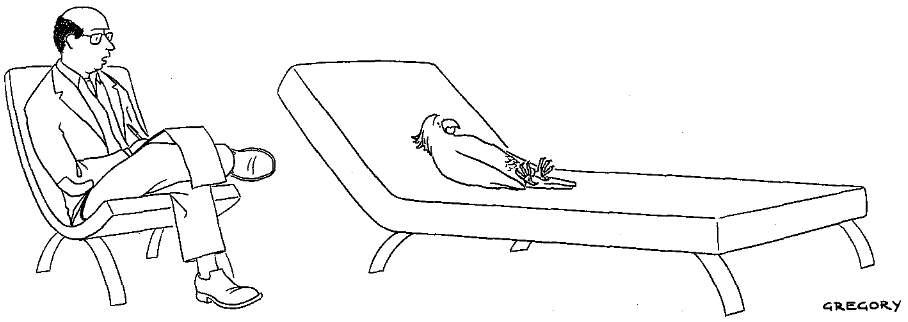
In 1998, a woman named Vicky Prunty paid a visit to Utah State Senator Scott Howell. Prunty had been to see him a couple of years before, when she was living with five of her six children in a shelter for battered women after leaving a polygamous relationship. Howell had helped her find another place to live. Now Prunty had a larger purpose: she wanted the state to crack down on polygamy.

"I was basically a foster, orphan-type kid that really wanted to be a part of an eternal family," Prunty told me recently. She had gone through a typical Mormon courtship, having met her future husband, Gary Batchelor, at B.Y.U. when she was eighteen. A convert to the religion at seventeen in his native England, Batchelor had just returned to college after two years of missionary service in Italy. He and Prunty were married in the temple in 1981, and they soon began having children. "For about seven years, we lived a very mainstream, monogamous life," Prunty recalled. "Then our life took kind of a turn."

Prunty, who is a reflective, matronly woman of thirty-eight with bright-blue eyes, said that she and her husband began to read early teachings of the Church that linked godhood to plural marriage. In the course of their reading, they also learned that the tenets of an experiment in communal living, which Smith had called the United Order of Enoch, were being followed by a variety of colonies in the state. Prunty and her husband pledged themselves to one such group, called the Rockland Ranch, near



*"I'm sorry, Mr. Jenkins doesn't like you."*



*"I think what Polly really want is approval."*

Moab. Batchelor stayed in Salt Lake City during the week, selling cars, and his wife and children moved into a sandstone cave.

In 1988, Gary Batchelor met a nineteen-year-old legal secretary and student of broadcast journalism named Mary Morrison. During his visits to his wife and children, he began to talk about taking "the next step"—marrying a second wife. Prunty had her doubts—"I believed that plural marriages couldn't be lived in this lifetime," she said—but she felt that it wasn't her place to question her husband. At his urging, she wrote a letter to Mary and invited her "into the family."

Morrison, who had been reared in a monogamous family, was at first appalled. "I basically wrote her back and told her to take a hike," she recently told me. Prunty answered her with, in Mary's words, "a really kind letter, which impressed me." During the next several months, Morrison fasted and prayed for a testimony about whether plural marriage was right for her. By the spring of 1989, she had become "adamant" that it was, but she remained uncertain about the Batchelors as an appropriate family. She continued to pray. In October, she paid a visit to the Batchelors. She was greeted by Vicky, who was noticeably pregnant, and by a child who was hanging on her mother's skirt. Warmed by the sight, she "fell in love" with the whole family. "I was walking on air," she recalled. The plural marriage took place that December in a secret ceremony. Vicky was seven months pregnant with her fourth child. She took Mary's hand and gave it to her husband, symbolizing the family's step away from monogamy and into polygamy.

During the women's first year as "sister wives," Vicky had the upstairs bedroom and Mary had a room downstairs. "It worked pretty well," Prunty said, but she felt an "unreality" about the arrangement, even though Gary was careful to treat both women equally. At night, he would sit between Vicky and Mary, watching television and holding hands with both of them. "We'd act like brother and sisters until a certain time," Vicky said. "Then he'd either go upstairs or downstairs. There were times when I made myself put her laundry on her bed just to see his robe on her bedpost. That made it real for me." The fact that Gary loved Mary, and was not just having sex with her out of some kind of religious obligation, unsettled Vicky. Ten months after the marriage, Mary gave birth to her first child; a second one was born fourteen months later. Meanwhile, Vicky had her fifth child.

In the third year of the relationship, Gary stopped having sex with Vicky. "He told me I had already committed 'spiritual fornication' against him," she said. "I guess he meant that I was rebelling against his authority." She asked him for a divorce. "He put his hand to the square, like they do when they're casting out evil spirits," she recalled. "He started praying for my death. I don't even know what he was saying, whether he was speaking in tongues or what." One afternoon, she dropped off her oldest son at a karate lesson, then drove over to the house of another polygamous family and asked if she could join them. The husband agreed. "I thought it would be easier being the third wife than the first wife," she told me. "I thought that, with a different husband, maybe I could live the principle better."

Prunty's new relationship—it was never formalized in a marriage ceremony—lasted only a few months before the man broke it off. "Basically, he sat us all down and said he never did believe in polygamy—he just did it to have sex with more than one woman," she recalled. She appealed to Gary to take her back, but he refused. (They were divorced in 1993, and he contributes to the support of their children.) When she tried to reconcile with the other man, he became violent, and she fled with her children to the shelter.

Scott Howell was shocked by Prunty's story. Since leaving the shelter, she had met other women like her, and she told Howell about the existence of incestuous clans, in which birth defects were common. With the Winter Olympics four years away, Howell foresaw a huge public-relations problem. "I didn't want to make this the No. 1 issue for foreign journalists coming into Utah," he told me. The solution, he decided, was to eliminate polygamy by 2002.

In Utah, polygamy abides in a legal fog. In 1935, the legislature passed an unenforceable law that made it a felony to cohabit with "more than one person of the opposite sex"—a statute that could conceivably criminalize anyone living in anything but a convent, a monastery, or a homosexual relationship. Howell's first act was to offer a bill that would raise the marriageable age, for girls, from fourteen to sixteen. A year earlier, a similar measure had been defeated by conservative lawmakers who were worried that it would encourage pregnant teen-agers to seek abortions in lieu of marriage. But Prunty proved to be a brilliant lobbyist. She formed a group of women who had been involved in polygamous families called Tapestry Against Polygamy, and she filled the gallery of the legislature with teen-age girls in wedding gowns. A compromise version of the legislation passed—girls could now marry at fifteen, with a judge's approval—and the state attorney general appointed a "polygamy czar."

To Mary Batchelor, Prunty's for-

*"Low man was bad enough. Now they've taken down the totem pole."*

mer sister wife, these developments seemed to be "modified ethnic cleansing." She and two other women, Anne Wilde and Marianne Watson, set about collecting positive stories of polygamous marriages, which they compiled into a book entitled "Voices in Harmony," which was published in 2000.

During the legislative session of 2001, Prunty lobbied for another bill, this one aimed at the leaders of the polygamous clans. The bill, sponsored by State Senator Ron Allen, would have made it a third-degree felony for a parent to allow a minor child to enter into an unlawful marriage or for any person to knowingly "solemnize" the union of a woman with a man who was already married. Anyone who "encouraged" or "promoted" such activity would also be subject to criminal charges. The state senate passed the Allen bill unanimously. It then went to the state legislature's judiciary committee, whose members decided to hold an open hearing on the bill.

When the committee opened its doors on the morning of February 14th, about a hundred polygamists showed up, a few with their children, and demanded to be heard. What followed was by far the largest public hearing in Utah's history in which polygamists aired their views openly. They were not advocating for the right to turn their daughters into child brides; in fact, some of them said that the marriageable age ought to be raised to eighteen. But they viewed marriage between consenting adults as a different matter. Owen Allred got up and said, "The man who wants several women to be his sexual partners can have children by them, and the state will support those children. He remains free of any legal accusation—until he marries more than one wife. Marry them, and he becomes a criminal. It is the marriage that becomes the crime."

Vicky Prunty reminded the committee of the dangers of incest. She said that one girl had come to Tapestry because she had been forced to marry her own father at the age of twelve. But many of the polygamists in the room said that they were opposed to incest and wanted to see it vigorously prosecuted. "The people here are not the guilty parties," Anne Wilde said. Mary Batchelor urged the committee to strike the words "encourage" and "promote" from the bill, "so that it couldn't be construed to make the teaching of our religious beliefs to our children a crime." The committee scratched that part of the bill.

After the hearing, the polygamists claimed victory. The lawmakers had modified the existing law by reducing the proposed penalty for performing illegal marriages, downgrading it to a misdemeanor. The polygamists seemed a little dazzled by what they had achieved. "This is a major day," Anne Wilde said. "It's the first time in a hundred years that this many people have come out in a public gathering in favor of a polygamous life style."

In any event, nobody was talking any longer about eliminating polygamy before the Olympics. "It's just too extensive," Ron Allen said later. "We've let this go on too long."

## HOW BIG A FOLD?

A disproportionate number of Mormons have been elected to higher office in America; although Mormons account for only 1.8 per cent of the country's population, five of the hundred United States senators are Latter-day Saints. The Church made a decisive entry onto the national political scene in 1976, when it launched a five-year campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment. (The Church feared that it would lead to a "unisex" society.) The Church is now conducting a similar campaign against same-sex marriage. Two years ago, Church members in California were instructed to vote in favor of Proposition 22, which upheld the ban against same-sex marriage, and in some cases members were directed to donate specific amounts of money to the cause. Church-supported prohibitions against gay marriage also passed in Hawaii and Alaska. Two years ago, the Church threatened to withdraw its support of the Boy Scouts of America if the organization allowed gay scoutmasters. Since the Church sponsors more scouting units than any other comparable institution, the threat, if acted upon, might have ended the scouting movement in the United States.

Mormon theology played an unexpected role in the recent debate over federal support for stem-cell research. Although the Mormons' usual partner in the culture wars, Roman Catholics, categorically condemned experimentation with human embryos, the five Mormon senators lined up on the side of science. "I believe that human life begins in the womb, not in a petri dish or a refrigerator," Utah's Senator Orrin G. Hatch said in a hearing in July. For Mormons, human life is just one phase of existence. They believe that everyone has a pre-incarnate life as a "spirit child," during which each awaits his or her opportunity to begin a human term on Earth. Among Mormons, the moment when the spirit child enters its mortal body is uncertain—a theological nicety that has enabled them to be somewhat flexible on the issue of abortion. The Church opposes abortion except when a pregnancy is caused by rape or incest, when the life of the mother is endangered, or when the child's survival is unlikely.

In recent years, the Church has become more flexible on matters of race. It was clear, following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, that it could not exist in America if it continued to practice racial discrimination, and yet the issue of extending priesthood to blacks was not resolved until 1978, when the Mormons' president, Spencer W. Kimball, expanded the eligibility rule to "all worthy males." That statement enabled Mormonism to become a truly international religion. There are now more than a hundred and fifty thousand Church members in Africa. According to Jan Shipps, a prominent non-Mormon historian of the religion, race is no more a problem in Mormon circles than it is in any other major religion. At Mormon headquarters, however, all the top executives are still white men.

In 1993, a leading apostle, Boyd K. Packer, spoke, with alarm, of the "major invasions into the membership of the Church" by feminists, homosexuals, and scholars and intellectuals. A few months later, five Mormon intellectuals were excommunicated and one was "disfellowshipped," in part for their involvement with women's issues. Since then, dissent within the Church has been subdued. Mormon women are generally cautious about labelling themselves as feminists. The basic unit of salvation in Mormonism is the family, not the individual, and for many women in the Church the emphasis on eternal family unity is deeply appealing. "About eighty-five per cent of Mormon women are perfectly happy with who they are," Shipps maintains. "It's only an extremely vocal minority who feel that their position is not fully equal in the Church."

Those who are willing to speak out maintain that the standing of women in the Church is in decline. "I believe that women's participation in the Church will become even more limited," Lynn Matthews Anderson, a Mormon who is a freelance writer and editor, told me. She maintains that Church leaders have discouraged women from becoming missionaries. "The Church for Mormon women is entirely different from the Church for Mormon men," she said.

Many Mormon intellectuals seem unconcerned with the question of whether Joseph Smith was a genuine prophet or a confidence man. "The starting point is that I am a committed Mormon," Ken Driggs, a Mormon historian and a lawyer in Atlanta, told me. "I can't imagine anything else. Once you make that decision, nothing knocks you awry. I am aware of the conflicts; I know the Book of Mormon doesn't stand up to historical examination. But for me to decide that the problems are insurmountable would mean walking away from five generations of people before me. What really clicks, what really keeps us there, is the culture."

There are now more Mormons outside the United States than within it. This phenomenon may be the response to an appeal that goes beyond matters of religious truth. "Essentially," the historian D. Michael Quinn says, "the Mormon message attracts people who want to become Americanized."

Leo Tolstoy is said to have called Mormonism "the American religion." Travelling on a train in Switzerland in 1857, he had met a Mormon man, probably a missionary, who had given him a favorable impression of the new religion. Thirty years later, one of Brigham Young's daughters, Susa Young Gates, sent Tolstoy an admiring biography of Joseph Smith by George Q. Cannon and a copy of the Book of Mormon. "I read both the Mormon Bible and the life of Smith and I was horrified," Tolstoy wrote in a diary entry. "Yes, religion, religion proper, is the product of deception, lies for a good purpose. An illustration of this is obvious, extreme in the deception: The Life of Smith; but also other religions, religions proper, only in differing degrees."

Five years later, Andrew D. White, an American diplomat in Russia, had a conversation with Tolstoy about Mormonism, in which the great novelist reportedly said that "on the whole he preferred a religion which professed to have dug its sacred books out of the earth to one which pretended that they were let down from Heaven." Forty-five years later, a Mormon writer told the story with embellishments that were no doubt more appealing to his audience. In this account, Tolstoy told White, "The Mormon people teach the American religion; their principles teach the people not only of Heaven, and its attendant glories, but how to live so that their social and economic relations with each other are placed on a sound basis. If the people follow the teachings of this Church, nothing can stop their progress—it will be limitless." ♦

PROFILES

# THE PLAYER QUEEN

*Why Judi Dench rules the stage and screen.*

BY JOHN LAHR

In the opening sequence of "Iris," an extraordinary film about the late novelist Iris Murdoch's descent into the limbo of Alzheimer's, Murdoch and her loyal man-child of a husband, the Oxford don John Bayley, are shown swimming like two plump sea lions through the murk of the Thames. They're happy in their underwater playground, which distorts light and form and contains the sediment of ages. They float freely but are always in contact, dodging among the rocks and weeds in joyful, directionless exploration. Water was Iris Murdoch's primal habitat; by no accident, it is also the favorite element of the woman who plays her here, Judi Dench. "There's a wonderful abandonment you feel in water," Dench says. "It's very liberating. It's like the unconscious. You're just floating around there and trusting that you're going to come up to the surface."

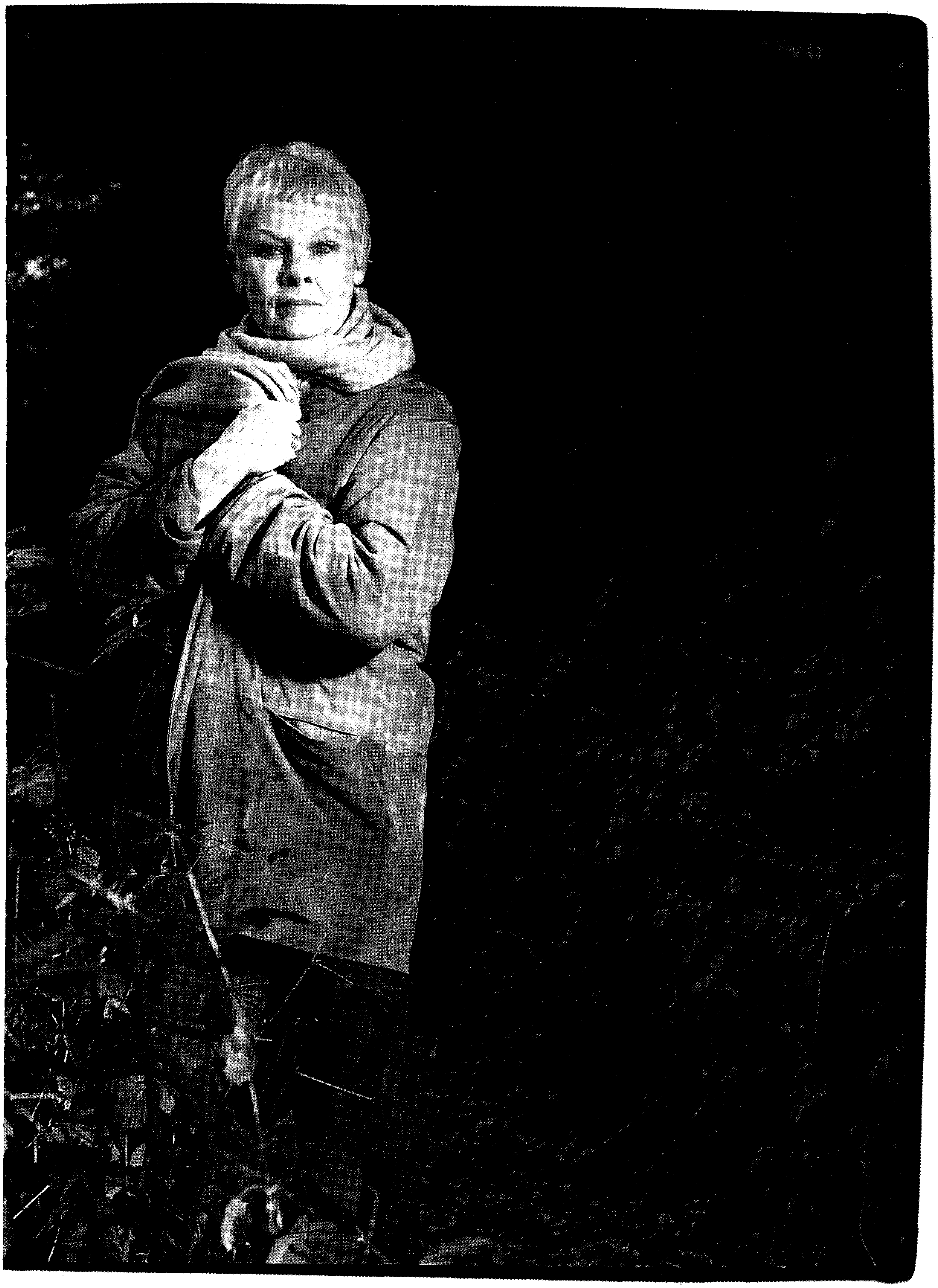
This is not the only point of intersection between the two women: the adventure of the unknown, the salvation of the imagination, the promotion of happiness, and a lifelong inquiry into goodness are all themes in the elusive lives of both Murdoch and Dench. Sir Richard Eyre, the director and co-author of "Iris," says that while writing the screenplay he tried to instill his sense of Dench into the character of Iris. "There was never a question of how do you bring Iris and Judi Dench together," he says. "Essentially, the character is Judi Dench-stroke-Iris Murdoch."

Dench, who has played both Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth I on film and was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1988, is beloved by the English public for her quintessential Britishness. "I think that in a lot of people's eyes she is the equivalent of the Queen—she inspires such phenomenal affection," says the director John Madden, who launched Dench's late-blooming film career in 1997 with "Mrs. Brown." (Significantly, last month the seventy-seven British families that lost relatives in the Twin Towers catastrophe chose Dench to read at the memorial service at Westminster Abbey.) But she and Murdoch share an Anglo-Irish heritage, and each, in her own way, is a paradoxical amalgam of propriety and wildness.

With a leafy home in Surrey, a silver Rover, a taste for simple if expensive clothes, a commitment to charities (she is a patron of a hundred and eighty-three of them), and her obbligato of drollery—what Billy Connolly, who starred opposite her in "Mrs. Brown," calls "that light, posh, self-effacing humor"—Dench, who is sixty-seven, cuts a deceptively sedate, suburban figure. At work, however, she trolls her turbulent Celtic interior, a vast tragicomic landscape that ranges between despair and indomitability. "There's a sort of crimson place deep within her—a fiery dark-red place that stokes all the things she does," Connolly says. "You don't get to see it. But you occasionally get glimpses of how tiresome she finds the doily-and-serviette crowd. You know, those English twittering fucking women—they think she's one of them, and she isn't." This complexity is what Dench brings to her acting, which is nowhere more inspired than in her depiction of Murdoch. Her performance parses every nuance in the writer's trajectory of decline—from embarrassment to bewilderment, from terror to loss, from nonentity to a final connection with an enduring life force, where, in the shuffle

PHOTOGRAPH BY DUDLEY REED

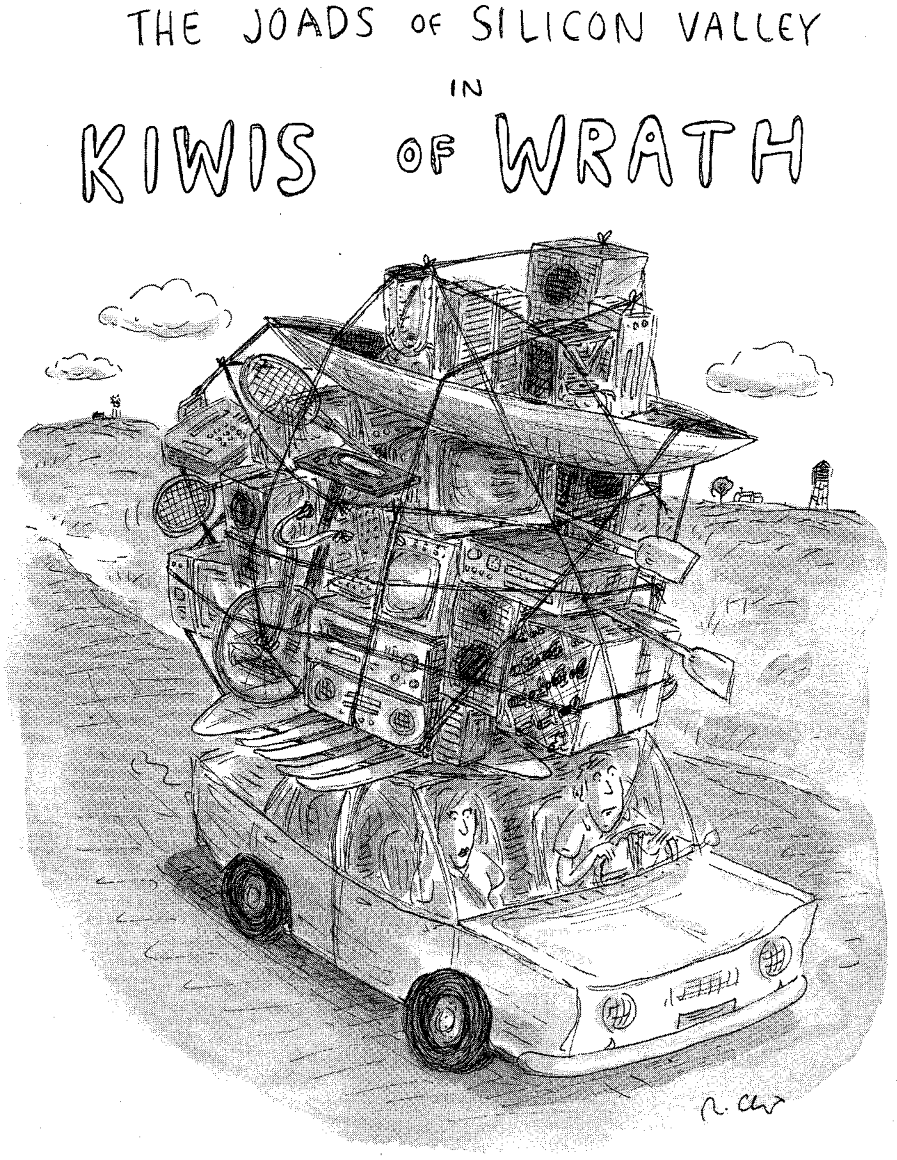
*Dench in her garden in Surrey. She describes herself as "an enormous console with hundreds of buttons, each of which I must press at exactly the right time."*



of dementia, Murdoch somehow finds a dance.

Dench is not much of a reader, but she has read most of Murdoch's novels, and before filming she went so far as to sit outside Bayley's house while he was away to absorb the shambolic atmosphere of the place. (She found his car in the driveway, unlocked and with a window open.) "I didn't want to miss that snapshot in my mind," she says. But her uncanny portrait emerged out of her own process, a combination of technical rigor and imaginative free fall, in which, according to Eyre, "she doesn't put anything of herself between her and the character." He explains, "I was really staggered at the way she transformed herself. Toward the end of the film, when Iris's mind has gone, and you look at Judi's face and see that implacability, the sense of peace and the absence in her eyes, that is alchemy. She didn't go to old people's homes. She didn't sit and study. It's intuitive. She's quick. I mean, *really* quick."

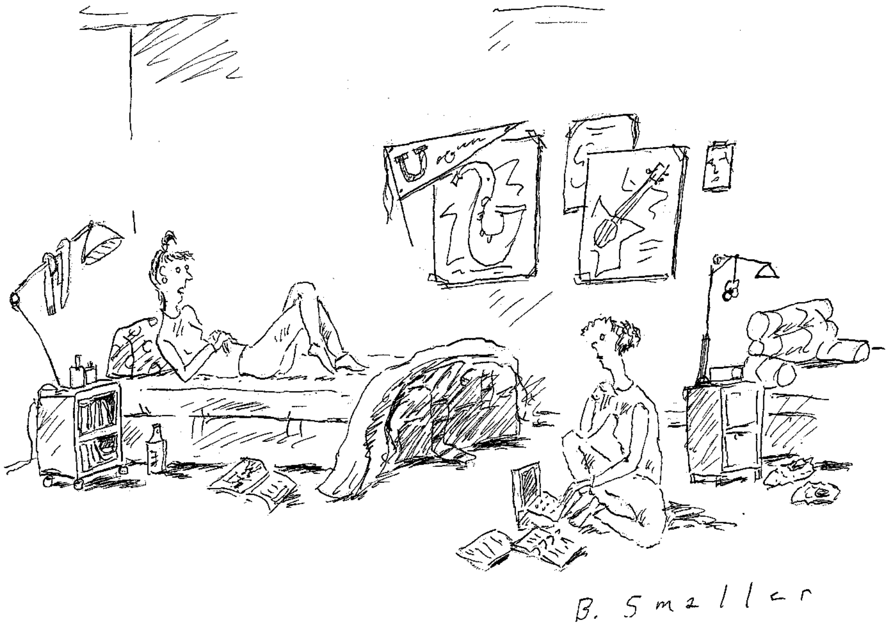
Except for time out to have a child and to nurse her husband of thirty years, the actor Michael Williams, who died last January of lung cancer, Dench has been performing almost constantly for four and a half decades. She appeared in the first season of the Royal Shakespeare Company, in 1961, and in the eighties was a founding member of Kenneth Branagh's Renaissance Theatre Company, for which she has also directed plays. Under the auspices of the Old Vic, the R.S.C., and the Royal National Theatre, she has turned in some of the greatest classical performances in recent memory. Her Juliet in Franco Zeffirelli's 1960 stage production of "Romeo and Juliet"; her Titania in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," directed by Sir Peter Hall in 1962; her Viola in "Twelfth Night" in 1969; her Lady Macbeth in Trevor Nunn's magnificent 1976 production; her Cleopatra in Hall's 1987 "Antony and Cleopatra"—all are exemplars of contemporary Shakespearean performance. Her work in the modern repertoire—as Anya in "The Cherry Orchard," as Juno Boyle in "Juno and the Paycock," as Lady Bracknell in "The Importance of Being Earnest," and as Christine Foskett in Rodney Ackland's rediscovered fifties classic "Absolute Hell"—has also had a huge impact on English theatregoers. And Dench has inspired allegiance as well through her television career, which includes thirty-four films and two popular long-running comedy series, "A Fine Romance" and "As Time Goes By."


THE JOADS OF SILICON VALLEY
IN
KIWIS OF WRATH

"See you on the ice, darling," she has been known to call out from her dressing room to an actor headed toward the stage. For Dench, "the crack"—the Irish term for fun—is riding the exhilarating uncertainty of the moment. To that end, she is famous (some would say notorious) for not having read many of the parts she accepts. Instead, she has someone else paraphrase the script for her. (Williams usually had this duty before he died; now it has fallen to Dench's agent, Tor Belfrage.) "Michael said, 'Just read that one line,'" Dench recalls of "Pack of Lies," Hugh Whitemore's successful spy story, in which she and Williams starred. "It was just one line. I read it, and I knew then that it would be all right."

"It often seems absurd to me that a woman as intelligent as Judi could roll up at the beginning of the rehearsal not having read the play," says Branagh, who directed Dench in his films of "Hamlet" and "Henry V" and has, in turn, been directed by her onstage in "Much Ado About Nothing" and "Look Back in Anger." Although this method allows Dench to arrive at rehearsals with, as Branagh puts it, "the right kind of blank page to start writing on," from a professional point of view it is also sensationally reckless. "I don't know what it is in me, this kind of perversity," Dench told me when I visited her at home last July. "I don't understand it myself. I think some people think it's an affectation. It's thrilling, though, isn't it? You don't know what's coming."

The habit of not reading scripts has, over the years, landed Dench in a few sticky theatrical situations, such as Peter



*"The way I see it, there will be plenty of time for abstinence after I'm married."*

Shaffer's turgid "The Gift of the Gorgon," in 1992. And at first she wasn't keen to take on her current West End outing, in a revival of "The Royal Family," the slim 1927 Edna Ferber and George S. Kaufman satire of the theatrical Barrymores, but her mind was made up for her when she received a call from the director, Peter Hall. "It's entirely a roll of the dice, but it has to do with friends, with people I love and admire," she explained several weeks before rehearsals of "The Royal Family" began. "So if Peter rings me up and says, 'You ought to do this play,' I say, 'Sure.' I swear before God I have not read the play."

Dench's risk-taking onstage is in inverse proportion to her vulnerability off it. "When I go into a rehearsal room, my coat and bag have to be nearest the door," she said in a recent television interview. Performing, for Dench, is an antidote to chronic insecurity; it gives her, she says, what the Cockneys call "bottle": "It's courage. You know, like jumping into ice-cold water. If it's to be done—do it. Go!" Recently when Trevor Nunn offered her a role at the National, she replied, "I want to come back to the National, but not in that part. Would you ask me to do something more frightening?"

Dench's derring-do also seems necessary to keep her nearly perpetual routine of rehearsal and performance a fresh and vigorous challenge. "Her desire is to re-create each time, to reëxperience, and not simply reproduce," Branagh says. To that end, she refuses analysis. Without preconceived notions, she tries to let the character play *her.* "She absolutely hates to rationalize," Eyre says. "When you're working with her, she'll ask a question about a scene or a character, and when you go to talk about it, at some point she'll say, 'Yeah, O.K., I understand.' She doesn't want it spelled out. She has to find it herself." A long time ago, when Eyre was doing a play with Dench at the National, where he was the artistic director for ten years, she left her script in the rehearsal room; the next day, Eyre handed it to her. " 'Oh, you look terribly shocked,' " he recalls her saying. " 'Is it because I didn't take my script home with me?' I said, 'Well, I guess so.' She talked to me about how she learned lines. The work that she does outside rehearsal is not sitting down with the script. She just sort of envisions the scene and colors it in her mind." Dench's method of bushwhacking through her unconscious to find the emotional core of a character is, she says, completely instinctive: "The subconscious is what works on the part. It's like coming back to a crossword at the end of the day and filling in seventeen answers straight off."

In one scene of "Iris," the senile Murdoch goes walkabout in the rain on a motorway and slips and falls down an embankment into the underbrush. This is the first and only scene in the film in which Dench's Murdoch, whose eyes are always turned inward, really sees and acknowledges Bayley. "I said to Judi, 'You have to find a way of doing it that reconciles a sort of rationality with the fact that her brain is more or less gone,' " Eyre says. "That's all she wanted to know." When the distressed Bayley (played by Jim Broadbent) finally finds her, Dench is covered with mud and laughing to herself. Out of her solitude, her eyes come to rest on Broadbent's face. "I love you," she says, and with a startling glimmer of clarity Dench manages to invoke the blessing and heartbreak of a lifetime of connection.

Dench describes herself as "an enormous console with hundreds of buttons, each of which I must press at exactly the right time." She adds, "If you're lucky enough to be asked to play many different parts, you have to have reserves of all sorts of emotions. When I was rehearsing a part I'd never, ever, ever discuss it with Michael, because I had that pressure-cooker syndrome. If I once open that little key—*pffft!*—the stuff goes."

In nature, as in art, the secret of conservation is not to disturb the wild things. Dench's brooding talent has its correlative in her five-acre Surrey domain, Wasp Green, and in the low-slung, wood-beamed 1680 yeoman's house where she lives with her twenty-nine-year-old daughter, the actress Finty Williams, her four-year-old grandson, Sammy, nine cats, and several ducks. The front of the house is bright, tidy, and picturesque in a *Country Life* sort of way; the back acres, however, have been left alone, with only a small path cut through a thicket of brambles, nettles, and wild orchids. "You have to see the back garden to understand Judi," Franco Zeffirelli says. "She puts up a façade sometimes, but for herself she reserves a private garden. You discover there treasures that you don't see at the front of the house."

On the day I visited her there last summer, Dench, in Wellington boots, stepped lively on the overgrown path. "I've got to cut these back," she said, swiping at the nettles. She pointed out new plantings: a black poplar to commemorate a row that had blown down the previous year; "Sammy's oak," a tree planted in honor of her grandson's birth; and the place she'd chosen for "Mikey's oak," a sapling that was originally an opening-night present from Williams to the director Anthony Page, whose production of “The Forest” was Williams’s last acting job. “What’s important to me is continuance—a line stretching on,” Dench said. “I hate things that start and finish abruptly.”

If the wild back garden is a kind of memory theatre for Dench, the theatre itself puts her in touch with her family, which she calls “a unit of tremendous encouragement.” “All the qualities that Judi has as a person, and, indeed, as an actress, come from the very close family background,” Williams said on a 1995 “South Bank” TV biography of his wife. Dench’s love of work, painting, swimming, jokes, and especially acting are passions she absorbed from her father, Dr. Reginald Dench, a physician who served as the official doctor for the Theatre Royal in York before he died, in 1964. “I remember going visiting with him,” Dench says. “When we turned into a road, children would run and hold on to the car. That’s the kind of doctor he was. He was a wonderful raconteur. He had the most incredible sense of humor—just spectacular.” When Dench was about fifteen, on holiday in Spain, she admired a pair of expensive blue-and-white striped shoes. “Well, I think you could probably have those shoes,” she recalls her father saying. “Let’s go to lunch. We’ll discuss it.” At lunch, Dench—a fish lover—scanned the buffet of prawns and lobsters. “Daddy looked at me and said, ‘Would you like that?’ ‘Yes, please.’ So I had four big prawns and enjoyed every minute of it. Daddy said, ‘You’ve just eaten your shoes.’ ”

The Dench children—Judi, Jeffrey, who is now an actor, and Peter, who became a doctor—grew up in York, in a sprawling Victorian house, where Judi, the youngest, had the attic room and was allowed to draw on the walls. “She got her own way,” Jeffrey says. “Judi was Daddy’s Beautiful Lady.” According to her daughter, Finty, the only discrepancy between the public Dench and the private one is her temper. Her volatility is an inheritance from her flamboyant, sharp-tongued mother, Olave, who once threw a vacuum cleaner down the stairs at a representative who had called to inquire about it. “You didn’t cross her, or *pow!*—not hitting, but a tongue-lashing, and you stayed lashed,” Jeffrey says. Dench’s contradictory nature—with its combination of mighty spirit and “nonconfidence,” as she calls it—appears to have been forged as she tried to negotiate her mother’s combustible personality. “She loved admonishing Judi,” Trevor Nunn says of Olave. “I mean the kind of admonishment that comes from absolute worship. The privilege of being able to be the one who could put her in her place. ‘Judi, you mustn’t say that!’ ‘Judi, you’re such an embarrassment!’ ” Dench says, “She was outrageous.” In the late seventies, by which time she was having trouble with her sight, Olave had lunch with Nunn and Dench at a sophisticated, self-congratulatory Italian restaurant called the Lugger. “Olave ordered tomato soup, which came in a huge bowl,” Nunn recalls. “A waiter arrived with a little sachet of cream, with which he spelled out the name of the restaurant on the soup and then left. ‘Judi,’ Olave said, ‘a man has just come and written “bugger” in me soup!’ ”

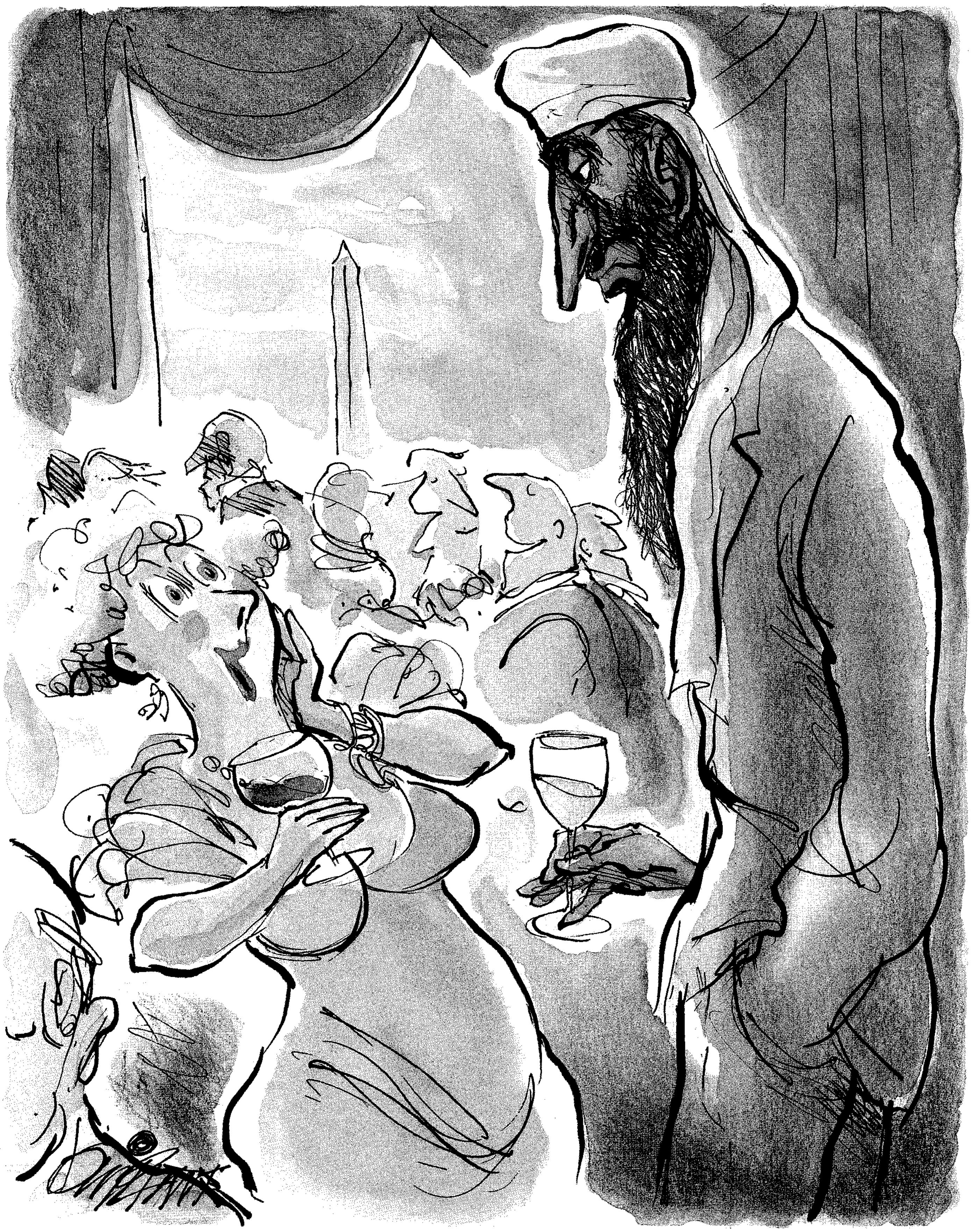
Dench’s parents took a keen interest in amateur dramatics and, when Dench became an actress, their support verged on the overprotective. They saw their daughter in “Romeo and Juliet” more than seventy times; once, Reginald got so involved in the play that when Judi, as Juliet, said, “Where is my father and my mother, nurse?” he was heard to say, “Here we are, darling. In Row H.”

Whereas most stars seek a public to provide the attention they failed to get in childhood, Dench’s commitment to the theatrical community is, she admits, an attempt to reproduce the endorsement and excitement of her first audience—her family. She claims not to be “good at my own company.” Rather, to understand her own identity she needs to be in the attentive gaze of others—as the psychologist D. W. Winnicott puts it, “When I look I am seen, so I exist.” Dench is clear on this point. “I need somebody to reflect me back, or to give me their reflection,” she says. Ned Sherrin, who directed Dench and Williams in “Mr. and Mrs. Nobody” in 1986, says he was so aware of Dench’s need “to create a family with each show” that he added a couple of walk-ons to what was otherwise a two-person play.

Dench, who keeps a collection of Teddy bears and hearts and a doll’s house at Wasp Green, somehow contrives, as Branagh says, “to feel and be in the moment, as a child.” In the collegial atmosphere of a theatre company, she is an adored and prankish catalyst, inevitably, as her brother Jeffrey points out, “at the center.” “Eight going on sixty-seven” is how Geoffrey Palmer, her co-star in the nineties TV series “As Time Goes By,” characterizes the innocence and spontaneity she brings to the daily routine of self-reinvention. Her process—her abdication of responsibility to intuition, her need to be told the story—is not so much about being lost as it is about being held. She casts the director as her father and exhibits an almost filial devotion. “When we did ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream,’ she did this extraordinary Titania,” Hall says. “I said to her, ‘One day, you’ll play Cleopatra. I want you to make me a promise that when you do it you’ll do it with me.’ We shook hands on it.” Hall goes on, “Twenty years later, she rang me up and said, ‘I’ve just been asked to play Cleopatra by the R.S.C. I said I was promised to you. Now, do you want to do it?’ ”

From her first sighting onstage—as a seventeen-year-old Ariel in a production of “The Tempest,” at the Mount School, in York, where she boarded from 1947 to 1953—Dench was transparently a natural. But neither Dench, who then aspired to be a set designer, nor her teachers took her ability very seriously. The novelist A. S. Byatt, a schoolmate, recalls, “I used to talk to Katharine MacDonald, the English mistress who taught her. ‘You know, Judi will probably be content,’ as she put it, ‘to dabble her pretty feet in amateur dramatics.’ ”

Dench enrolled at London’s Central School of Speech and Drama simply because her brother Jeffrey, who went there, had told her appealing stories about the place. Vanessa Redgrave, who was in Dench’s class, and who was then self-conscious and gawky, remembers being both “admiring and jealous” of Dench’s naturalness. “She skipped and hopped with pleasure and excitement up the stairs, down the corridors, and onto the stage,” Redgrave wrote in her autobiography. “She wore jeans, the only girl who had them, a polo-neck sweater, and ballet slippers that flopped and flapped as she bounded around.” The turning point in Dench’s ambition came during a mime class in her second term, when she was required to perform an assignment—called “Recollection”—that she’d completely forgotten to prepare. “I don’t remember thinking anything out,” she says. “I walked into a garden. I bent down to smell something like rose-



"Not the Osama bin Laden!"

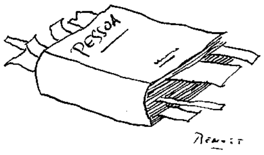
mary or thyme. I walked and just looked at certain things. I picked up a pebble, and threw it into what I imagined was a pond and watched the ripples going out from it. I looked over and sat on a swing. And I swung, you know, like you do on a swing that isn't there. Then I walked out of the garden. That was my mime." Her teacher, Walter Hudd, gave her, she says, "the most glowing notice I think I've ever had. What is more, he said, 'You looked like a little Renoir doing it.' I thought, Well, I think that I will enjoy what I'm going to do, hopefully get work, go for it."

Dench graduated with a first-class degree and four acting prizes. According to her biography, the unfortunately titled "Judi Dench: With a Crack in Her Voice," by John Miller, a notice was posted on the school's bulletin board naming her the student most likely to become a star; and when the Old Vic offered her the role of Ophelia opposite John Neville's Hamlet it seemed a self-fulfilling prophecy. "ENTER JUDI—LONDON'S NEW OPHELIA—OLD VIC MAKE HER A FIRST-ROLE STAR," the *Evening News* announced. When Neville heard about his tyro Ophelia, "I blew my top," he says. He begged the theatre's publicity department not to hype her before the opening. "I thought, and still think, that it would have been best just to let the media discover her for themselves," he says. Dench was more or less annihilated by the press. "Hamlet's sweetheart is required to be something more than a piece of Danish patisserie," Richard Findlater wrote in the *Sunday Dispatch;* in the *Observer*, Kenneth Tynan swatted her away as "a pleasing but terribly sane little thing." At the end of the season, when the production toured America, the role was taken away from Dench. "That was a kind of dagger to the heart," she says. "I remember John Neville saying to me, 'You must decide what you're doing this for.' And I made my mind up, and I think that's what keeps me going." The answer remains Dench's secret. "The only part of her that is totally unreachable for me is that she's never told me why she's an actress," Finty says. "I would love to know what motivates her."

Dench came of age just as the definitions of femininity were being rewritten, and she was an incarnation of the freewheeling, bumptious independence of the eternally young New Woman. With a cap of close-cropped hair, a strong chin, high cheekbones, big alert eyes, and a wide smile, the five-foot-two Dench cut a gamine figure onstage. Zeffirelli still thinks of her as "a kind of irresistible bombshell." He says, "She was funny and witty and biting. You had to be very careful what you said because she would answer back promptly. She was a dynamo, this girl. She just was an extraordinary surprise, because I was accustomed to Peggy Ashcroft and Dorothy Tutin, that style of acting."

David Jones, who directed one of the high-water marks of Dench's TV career, "Langrishe, Go Down" (1978), remembers her quicksilver quality in Zeffirelli's "Romeo and Juliet." He describes her "darting—like a bird coming onto the stage and going off again. You weren't quite aware of the feet touching the ground, this extraordinary agility of body and of mind." Dench's kinetic quality onstage finds different but no less startling expression in film. "She has a kind of sprung dynamic with her eyes," John Madden says. "They don't move gradually and settle or shift. They dart, then dart back, then settle again on the place that they just avoided looking at. It's almost like a double take, which suggests a kind of current flowing in an opposite direction from what she is saying."

When you meet Dench, it's hard not to feel the engine running inside her. She's nervy. Her fingers play across her lips; her feet tap under the table. Her lightness and quickness are very much a part of her metabolism as an actress and lend credibility to her performances. "She is the perfect Shakespearean, because the great characters in Shakespeare have fantastic speed of thought," Nunn says. "They have speed of wit, speed of response, speed of invention of the image. That only works if the actor convinces the audience that that language is being coined by that brain in that situation." He adds, "You live



## DETACHED VERSES

1
Soon
Soon you will pass from the darkened room
to another world. Freed from debts
and contacts.

2
One more
One more look
at the neighbor's garden
and his dog asleep
on the still warm tiles.

3
A headline
A headline still blaring
by the base of an overflowing garbage can.

4
A little
A little longer in the setting light of
the sun.

5
The stub of a moment of parting
from things we ignored when we could still
live erect on our feet.

6
Things we believed would never
fade have already been abandoned
by your memory.

7
If only you had been one of the philosophers!
Giving a flavor of meaning
to ruined buildings, to acts

of heroism, to our fate.

8
Was that leap
into the depths
any easier?

9
Soon
Soon we shall know
if we have learnt to accept that the stars
do not go out when we die.

—*Abba Kovner*

*(Translated, from the Hebrew, by Eddie Levenston.)*

in the moment with her. There's never a sense that she's doing a recitation."

Dench's combination of insight and inspiration, charisma and cunning has made her one of Britain's two marquee players whose names guarantee West End commercial success. (Her friend Dame Maggie Smith is the other.) Even with the drastic fall-off of tourism after September 11th, "The Royal Family" had half a million pounds in advance bookings, and, despite a tepid press, is still doing brisk business. Dench's drawing power, for which she is paid a five-figure salary every week, plus up to ten per cent of the gross, has been greatly enhanced since the mid-nineties by her emergence as an international film star. Before being touched by what she calls "the luck of John Madden," who directed her in both "Shakespeare in Love" and "Mrs. Brown," Dench had not shown much interest in films, though she'd appeared in twelve. When she was starting out, she was told by an industry swami that she didn't have "a movie face." "It put me completely off," says Dench, who nonetheless nearly got the starring role in Tony Richardson's 1961 film "A Taste of Honey." "But then I only ever really loved the stage. It's only recently that I've got to like film so much." For the last three James Bond films, Dench's severe side has been siphoned off into M, Bond's no-nonsense boss; and among the fifty-five awards she lists in her bio are three Oscar nominations in the past four years—for "Mrs. Brown," "Shakespeare in Love," and "Chocolat." (The command and wit of her seven-minute cameo as Elizabeth I in "Shakespeare in Love" earned her the 1999 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress.)

Among theatre people, Dench's popularity is a source of some curmudgeonly grousing—"If she farted, they'd give her an award," one playwright said—and some good jokes. Eyre recounted a conversation he once had with the playwright Alan Bennett, who had seen a man wearing a heavy-metal-style T-shirt that read "Hitler: The European Tour." They tried to imagine a T-shirt in worse taste. Recalling the thirty-nine Turin soccer fans who had been killed at a match against Liverpool in 1995, Eyre suggested "Liverpool 39–Turin 0." "Yes, that's ghastly," Eyre recalls Bennett saying. "But the worst-taste T-shirt, the very, very worst, would be 'I Hate Judi Dench.' "

One clue to Dench's appeal is her husky voice, which has a natural catch in it; certain notes fail to operate. When Dench was at the Nottingham Playhouse in the mid-sixties, she had the box office display a notice that said, "Judi Dench is not ill, she just talks like this." Dench's sound is idiosyncratic but not mannered; it is full of intimations that, as Alan Bennett says, "open you up to whatever she's doing" and allow various interpretations. Sir Ian McKellen, who has performed with Dench in four plays, most memorably as Macbeth to her Lady Macbeth, calls it "a little girl's voice—the crack suggests she's not in control."

Another reason for Dench's popularity is her warmth. She communicates a palpable, deep-seated generosity. "You feel somehow, even as a member of the audience, that if you were in trouble she would help you and laugh you out of it," Hall says. Dench pays close attention to her audience. During the half hour before a show, she keeps the loudspeakers in her dressing room turned up, both to take the measure of the house and to pump up her adrenaline. "I have to hear the audience coming in," she says. "I need to be generated by it—for the jump-off. It's like a quickie ignition." Once, an American student asked Dench if the audience made a difference to her; Dench replied, "If it didn't make a difference, I'd be at home with me feet up the chimney. That's who I'm doing it for." "It's a little unnerving when you're working with her," McKellen says. "What's happening is that she's making love to the audience—not making love but providing the focus of attention to an audience that wants to love. You could be wrapped in Judi's arms onstage and acting as closely with her as possible, and she's capable of betraying you, because her main reason for being in your arms is for the audience's delectation. It isn't upstaging. That isn't taking away the focus. Her spirit is flowing, and it's a decision she's made that it will flow. And when I'm in the audience I want her to do that."

In performance, Dench is a minimalist: no gesture or movement is wasted. Richard Eyre refers to what he calls her "third eye": "It's the ability to walk on fire and yet be completely unburnt, to be red-hot with passion and at the same time there's this third eye that is looking down thinking, Am I doing this right?" Billy Connolly told me about filming one scene in "Mrs. Brown": In the first meeting between the widowed Queen Victoria and her Scottish manservant, John Brown, Brown's forthrightness catches the Queen off guard. "Honest to God, I never thought to see you in such a state," Brown says. "You must miss him dreadfully." In an astonishing closeup, the austere formality of Dench's visage suddenly transforms—a cloud of grief sweeps over her and she breaks up. "Judi did that twelve times," Connolly says. "Every time, I thought I'd really wounded her. You see me looking all bewildered. Well, I actually was."

"Dench has a kind of glamour when she performs," says Hal Prince, who directed her as Sally Bowles in "Cabaret" in 1968 and considers her "the most effective of all the people who played the part." Glamour—the word has its root in the Scottish word for "grammar"—is an artifice of elegant coherence; it requires distance. Dench, who is no Garbo or Dietrich, manufactures this not through stage-managed aloofness but through a natural sense of containment. David Jones says, "Her gift is to step down the throttle, so you don't get the full impact of her passion; you just know there's an enormous amount in reserve. It's like a wave suspended." McKellen observes, "She goes *out*, but she doesn't always invite you *in*."

On a bright July morning, Dench picked me up outside Gatwick Airport to ferry me back to Wasp Green. She arrived with a story—one that she retold three times during the day. She hadn't known what I looked like, she said—though I later noticed on her desk a book I'd sent her with my jacket photo prominently displayed—and she'd stopped two men before I loomed up in her windshield. "I slowed down and this man says, 'I know you. Are you with American Airlines?'" she said. At a stroke, she had levelled the playing field, by making herself appear just an ordinary, unrecognized citizen. The story got us talking and laughing. Disarming others is one of Dench's great social gifts, and one of her most skillful defenses. "She was successful very young," Eyre says. "She developed some sort of tactic that stopped people from disliking her."

As a diva Dench is something of a disappointment. Her dislike of public display—what Branagh calls her "puritanical scrutiny of anything showy"—can be attributed at least in part to the tenets of her faith. She was introduced to Quaker practice as a teen-ager at the Mount School, and she still goes to Quaker meetings. "I have to have quietness inside me somewhere, otherwise I'd burn myself up," she said in a recent television interview. Quakerism requires its followers to look for the light in others, as well as in themselves, and this, in a way, explains Dench's view of acting as a service industry. "It's a very unselfish job," she says. "It's about being true to an author, a director, a group of people, and stimulating a different audience every night. If you're out for self-glorification, then you're in the wrong profession."

"There are a lot of people who are very willing to put my mother on a pedestal, which is a lonely existence," Finty says. "She wants to dispute that so much that she will literally do anything for anybody." For twelve years, Dench and Williams lived with all of their in-laws in one house, and Dench is a legendary sender of postcards and birthday cards; by Finty's reckoning, she gives about four hundred and fifty Christmas presents a year. She once gave Eyre a wooden heart carved from a tree trunk; and, for as long as Hall can remember, on his birthday Dench has managed to have delivered—as far afield as Australia—his favorite meal: oysters, French fries, and a bottle of Sancerre. "Comes my seventieth birthday, and there's no oysters, no Sancerre," Hall says. "I said to my wife, 'Well, I must be off the list.' We had my dinner"—a party for fifty, with Dench at his side—"and there's a Doulton china plate from Judi, specially made, with six oysters and chips painted on it."

This hubbub of good will and connection, however, skirts the issue of intimacy. "Judi has always found safety in numbers," says David Jones, who was involved with her briefly in his twenties. "When we were dating, I would arrange what I thought was a one-on-one meeting to go to a museum or the theatre. Quite often, I would turn up and find two other people invited. And Judi would say, 'Isn't it fun? They're free! They can come with us.'" Some of Dench's schoolmates, like the writer Margaret Drabble, found her buoyancy "a little Panglossian." Even Dench's husband, a man prone to the kind of melancholy that he called "black-dog days," and which could stretch into months, sent up her effervescence. "With Judi, it's bloody Christmas morning every day," he told Branagh.

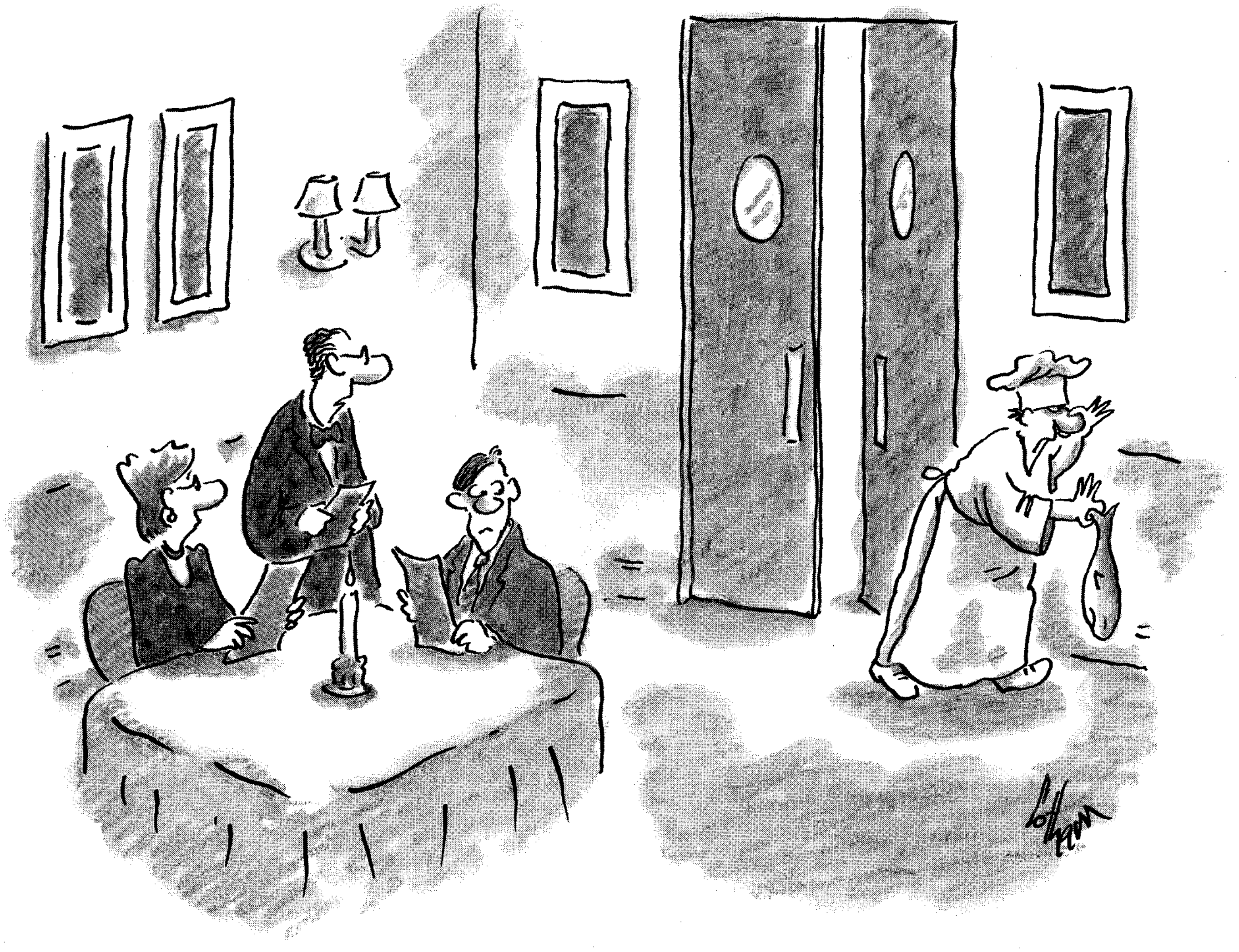
"I'm a person who off-loads an enormous amount onto people," Dench told me. "Inside, there's a core that I won't off-load." According to Finty, Dench "doesn't like to talk about very emotional things," but throughout our day together at Wasp Green her gallant cheer was tested by small unsettling moments. Although her charm never faltered, I was left with mixed messages, as if I had wandered into some Chekhovian scenario full of distressing secrets. Our extended conversation at a garden table on the lawn was interrupted first by a series of visitors (the mailman, a next-door neighbor, and two secretaries, each of whom got Dench's full attention), then by phone calls from Anthony Page and Peter Hall, then by someone delivering a single pink rose (I learned later that it was from Finty—carrying on Williams's tradition of having a single red rose sent to Dench every Friday of their marriage), then by Dench's need to feed the herd of cats, and then by a panic over a credit card that might or might not have been stolen.

Finally, and most perplexingly, Finty, who moved back into her parents' house when Michael fell ill, walked over unbidden with a provocative and bewildering announcement. "Your granddaughter is being played by an eighteen-year-old," she said. Dench's bright face collapsed. "Oh, Finty, I'm so sorry." "It's all right," Finty said, with a wave of her hand. "I'm all right." She turned back to the house, leaving her mother to struggle with her obvious disappointment. After a while, Dench said, "It'll be for a very good reason." Then, finally, she explained: "'The Royal Family.' She saw Peter." Finty, who had recently finished filming in Robert Altman's "Gosford Park," had hoped for a part in the play.

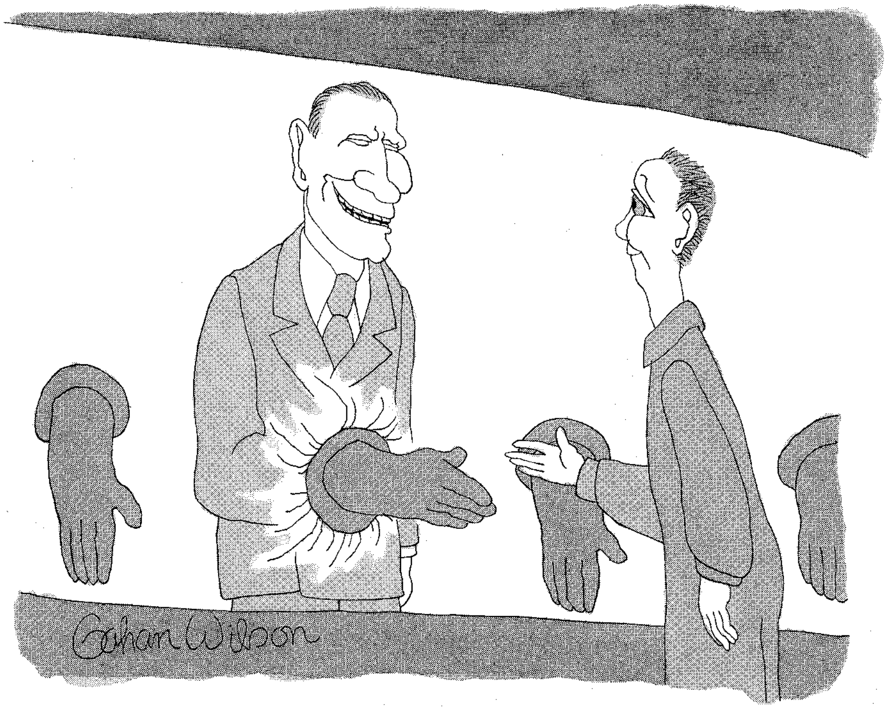
A few minutes later, Finty came out again to say goodbye. "It doesn't matter about that, you know," Dench said. "It doesn't matter." Finty agreed. "She's only a little eighteen-year-old, and maybe it's her first job. Maybe she'll be celebrating with someone and getting very excited," she said. "Maybe you will have something else to do, you never know," Dench said. "Never know," Finty said, nodding. "My audition's been cancelled on Tuesday." There was a long, fierce silence as she exited for the second time. "It's impossible being the child of an actor," Dench said. A certain gravity fell across her face as she seemed to push down feelings of remorse and guilt and got on with the professional task at hand.

Onstage, Dench has found her bliss; offstage, that bliss has cast a shadow on others—on her brother Jeffrey ("There is jealousy," he admits. "She's had the breaks. I'm a jobbing actor. You know that niggles"), on Michael ("In some way, his heart was broken by Judi's success," Eyre says), and now on Finty, who seemed, in a way that neither of them quite acknowledged or understood, both to adore her mother and to wish to subvert her. A few months later, Finty told me a story that reminded me of this. While she and Dench were watching television together one night, Finty said, "Oh, I think Kylie Minogue"—the Australian pop singer and former soap-opera star—"is so talented." According to Finty, Dench got "massively uptight. 'Define "so talented,"' she said. 'She's a singer, isn't she? She looks good.' She got really cross with me. She was, like, 'If you think that's talented, what are you aspiring to?'"

In her time, Dench has been serenaded by Gerry Mulligan from beneath her New York hotel window. She has watched, in West Africa, as, at the finale of "Twelfth Night," people in the audience threw their programs into the air, then jumped to their feet to sing and dance for several minutes. She has clowned with the comedians Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise. She has locked herself in a bathroom with Maggie Smith to escape the advances of the English comic character actor Miles Malleson. She has refused Billy Connolly's offer to show her his pierced nipples. As for her own nipples, she has stood in front of the camera, naked to the waist and unabashed, dabbing meringue on them. She has cooled herself on a summer day by jumping fully clothed into a swimming pool. At Buckingham Palace, she has scuttled away from the ballroom with Ian McKellen to sit on the royal thrones. In a Dublin restaurant, when Harold Pinter, a theatrical royal, barked about the tardiness of their dinner, Dench, according to David Jones, actually barked back, "Mr. Pinter, you are not in London. Would you please adjust." She has made David Hare a needlepoint pillow as a Mother's Day present, with the words "Fuck Off" intricately stitched into the tapestry. On the day she became Dame Judi, Dench pinned her D.B.E. insignia on the jacket of the actor playing Don



*"Out with the old fish, in with the new."*



*"Pleased to meet you, though of course I'm sorry about the circumstances."*

• •

Pedro in a production of "Much Ado About Nothing" that she was directing. It is a barometer of her louche and lively life that, not long after that, the first ten rows of the National's Lyttelton Theatre heard Michael Bryant, who was playing Enobarbus to her Cleopatra, say to Dench under his breath, "I suppose a fuck is well out of the question now?"

Still, as Zeffirelli says, "She has known suffering." At the corner of her Surrey property is a rowan tree, planted on an exact axis with the back door of the house, which, according to folklore, is supposed to protect the house from witches; it has not been able to protect Dench from the caprices of life. Soon after Michael died, in January, an electrical fault in the garage—an old barn—started a fire that gutted it to the frame. That charred skeleton is the first thing that rolls into view as you enter the property, and it stands in eerie contrast to the tranquillity behind it—wisteria by the front door, a sundial, a swimming pool, a flotilla of plastic slides and Winnie-the-Pooh toys tucked underneath the warped cantilevered timbers of the porch. Seven years earlier, Dench's house in Hampstead had burned down and a lifetime's memorabilia went up in flames. And in 1997, in a weird instance of life imitating art, Dench, like her character Esme in "Amy's View," which she was rehearsing at the time, learned that Finty, then twenty-five, was eight months pregnant and hadn't told her. She went immediately to Eyre's office at the National. "She stood in the doorway and just collapsed," he recalls. "She exploded. I'd never seen that. Unbelievably painful. She was massively wounded that the person she had thought of as her best friend in the world had not confided in her the not insignificant fact of her pregnancy." (Finty hadn't wanted Michael, a conservative Catholic, to know that she was having an illegitimate child.) Nevertheless, rehearsals of "Amy's View" went on. Eyre says of Dench, "Deep within her is the ethos that you don't let people down. If you're an actor, you go on. As Tennessee Williams says, you endure by enduring."

On July 9th of last year, a muggy Monday, at St. Paul's Church in Covent Garden, a standing-room-only crowd heard Trevor Nunn eulogize Michael Williams as a fine actor and partner. "I remember them courting," he said, standing opposite an enlarged photo of Williams, who was five feet four and puckishly handsome. "When they got married, Mike said to me, he was in the grip of feelings 'beyond any happiness he had ever dreamed of.' He told me more than once that his favorite line in Shakespeare was 'You have bereft me of all words, lady.' Because when he was with Jude, he knew the full extent of what Shakespeare was saying."

By the time Dench and Williams were married, in 1971, when she was thirty-six, Dench had done a lot of living. "When she likes something, she wants it like a wild animal," Zeffirelli says. Eyre adds, "She was prodigiously falling in love with the wrong man." One such man was the late comic actor Leonard Rossiter, who was in another relationship when they had an affair. "Some days, she'd come in and she'd had a wonderful day with him," recalls McKellen, who was then co-starring with her in "The Promise." "Other times, he'd have to leave early or hadn't turned up, and she was desperate. Tears, tears, tears. She was helpless and hopeless. What I was seeing was utterly vulnerable."

In 1969, on an R.S.C. tour of Australia, Charlie Thomas, a talented young actor with a drinking problem, who was playing the lovelorn Orsino to Dench's Viola, died under mysterious circumstances. Thomas had been very dependent on Dench, Nunn told me. "It was a shattering situation," he said. Williams, who was also a member of the R.S.C. and had become, in Nunn's words, "probably more than a friend," flew out to comfort her. "What was between them deepened enormously during that time," Nunn says. "Mike arriving made a fantastic difference." On that trip, Williams proposed, but Dench demurred. "No, it's too romantic here, with the sun and the sea and the sand," Williams remembered her saying. "Ask me on a rainy night in Battersea and I'll think about it." One rainy night in Battersea, in 1970, she said yes.

Williams, who came from Liverpool, had a more working-class pedigree than Dench, and he had the right combination of sturdiness and faith to both tether Dench and contain what her agent calls the "Dizzy Dora" side of her personality. "Michael was all-calming," Dench says. By every account, they were good companions. Dench recalls, "He used to say of himself, because he was Cancerian—the crab—and I'm a Sagittarian, 'I'm scuttling away toward the dark, and you're scuttling toward the light. What we do is we hold hands and keep ourselves in the middle.'"

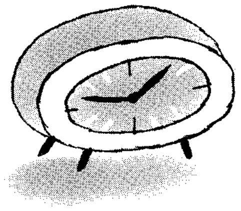
But, as the decades wore on, and despite "A Fine Romance," the sitcom they starred in together in the early eighties, Williams was increasingly in Dench's shadow. "In a sense, every one of her successes was a diminution of him," Eyre says. Dench was acutely aware of the problem. "Judi was protective of Michael like a lioness," Geoffrey Palmer says. "I don't think Michael was an easy man. But the fact that all his married life he was Mr. Judi Dench—that's difficult for any man. He used to get very low. He sat at home feeding the bloody swans while she was doing three jobs a day." According to Dench, during these depressions Williams would become remote and "very, very silent." She says, "I had to give an incredible amount of confidence to Michael, who was very unconfident indeed."

On the inside of Dench's wedding ring is inscribed a modified line from "Troilus and Cressida," which Williams included in the first note he wrote to her: "I will weep you, as 'twere a man born in April." It proved to be somewhat prescient. On their twenty-fifth anniversary, Dench spoke of "just missing the rocks." The marriage, she says, was volatile. "I throw things," she adds. "I threw a hot cup of tea at him and his mother. And the saucer. I didn't hit either of them, unfortunately." Williams enjoyed spending time at the local pub. On several Sundays, when they had guests for lunch, Williams and the male guests rolled back from the pub late for the meal. "Mum's like 'Fine. Lock all the doors,'" Finty recalls. "'No, he's not coming in unless he can get through the top window.'" Williams and his crew climbed to their lunch on a thirty-foot ladder. And once, just before Christmas in 1983, an argument about the boiler sent Dench and Williams into such a blind fury that they refused to talk or look at each other on the long ride into London, where they were performing in "Pack of Lies." "The air was black, and we're bowling down Shaftesbury Avenue and not speaking and this person knocks on the window and begins to sing 'A Fine Romance,'" Dench says. "We howled with laughter. Howled. I realized it very much in the last year—he was a tremendous anchor to me. A real, proper anchor."

Just months before Williams died, the family took a trip to Aberdeenshire, where Billy Connolly had gathered some friends at his castle. The week before, Williams had asked Dench whether he was going to die, and she'd told him he was. "When Judi told me about it, she started by looking me in the eye and ended up fiddling with the cutlery, then just went very quiet," Connolly recalls. "She went to a place in her head where she obviously feels much more comfortable and didn't say a thing." Connolly is a banjo player, and when Dench and Williams were in residence he and his other guests—Steve Martin (banjo), Eric Idle (guitar), the Incredible String Band's Robin Williamson (mandolin), and a local fisherman who played the fiddle—would go to a clearing in a nearby wood, build a fire, and sit on tree stumps to play, sing, and sometimes dance into the night. Connolly has a picture of the revels, with two green wicker chairs brought into the circle for Williams and Dench. Williams is laughing and holding a large glass of whiskey. He's looking beyond the fire at the fiddler; Dench is looking at him. "They were like young lovers," Connolly says. "They touched all the time. The wicker chairs are still there. We can't move them. Nobody wants to. 'Cause it's Judi and Michael."

"I have a huge amount of energy," Dench told me when we met at the Union Club in Soho for lunch in November. "Grief produces more energy, and all that needs burning up." In the ten months since Williams's death, Dench's herculean workload—"The Royal Family" and three films, "The Importance of Being Earnest," "The Shipping News," and "Iris"—had brought some of the shine back to her pale-blue, almond-shaped eyes. Her face was both animated and calm. "When my father died, it was almost like she was curiously liberated," Finty says. And although Dench still feels "lopsided," she said, "I just want to learn new things all the time," and was full of news of her accomplishments in gardening, archery, and pool.

She had also learned to ride a Zappy scooter—a sort of skateboard with handlebars. Kevin Spacey, who before making "The Shipping News" told the director, Lasse Hallström, that he had two goals—"to give a good performance and to make Dench laugh"—had taught her in Central Park on his scooter, which has a turbo engine that goes up to about twenty miles per hour. "I was running along with her as she did it," Spacey says. "People were kind of recognizing us, particularly her. Someone said, 'Didn't you have something to do with James Bond?' And she said, 'Yes, I'm his boss,' and kept moving." From her gold-leafed diary, Dench produced a photo of Spacey on location; he was wearing a black baseball cap with "Actor" embroidered above the visor and a sweatshirt she'd had made for him with the legend "The Caramel Macchiato of Show Business," in honor of the coffee he'd brought her each day on the shoot. That evening, she told me, Spacey was coming to "The Royal Family."



On performing nights, Dench leaves Wasp Green by car at quarter to five and arrives at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London at six-fifteen. Her dressing room—No. 10, on the third floor, John Gielgud's favorite—has a blue carpet, high ceilings, an antechamber, and a gold plaque on the front door with her name on it. First, Dench reads and responds to her letters. Her next order of business is to talk with the company. "We always will check up with each other," she says. "Essential. It makes you laugh if you see them for the first time onstage. I don't know why. I'm on a knife edge in this play." Her ritual for getting dressed never varies. She puts on a body stocking, then black tights and a dressing gown. She bandages up her hair and does her face and, finally, her nails. Above her is an oval mirror festooned with greeting cards; to her right, a photo of Williams; and to her left a photo of her grandson, Sammy. Beside her on the dressing table are two lucky pigs, two trolls, and a snail (a memento of her very first role, at the age of four).

After our lunch, on the way out, I mentioned to Dench that I hadn't yet seen "The Royal Family." She paused at the front door of the club. "Will you tell me when you're coming in?" she said, holding out her cheek to be kissed. "And I'll overact for you." It was an exquisite exit. The line came so fast and was played so deftly and spoken with such warmth that, for a moment, I believed she'd never said it before. ♦

FICTION

# SWEPT AWAY

### BY T. CORAGHESSAN BOYLE

People can talk, they can gossip and cavil and run down this one or the other, and certainly we all have our faults, our black funks and suicides and wives running off with the first man who'll have them and a winter's night that stretches on through the days and weeks like a foretaste of the grave, but in the end the only real story here is the wind. The puff and blow of it. The ceaselessness. The squelched keening of air in movement, running with its currents like a new sea clamped atop the old, winnowing, harrowing, pinching everything down to nothing. It rakes the islands day and night, without respect to season, though if you polled the denizens of Yell, Funzie, and Papa Stour, to a man, woman, lamb, and pony they would account winter the worst for the bite of it and the sheer frenzy of its coming. One January within living memory, the wind blew at gale force for twenty-nine days without remit, and on New Year's Eve back in '92 the gusts were estimated at two hundred and one m.p.h. at the Muckle Flugga lighthouse here on the northernmost tip of the Isle of Unst. But that was only an estimate: the weather service's wind gauge was torn from its moorings and launched into eternity that day, along with a host of other things, stony and animate alike.

Junie Ooley should have known better. She was an American woman—"the American ornithological woman" is the way people around town came to refer to her, or sometimes just "the bird woman"—and she hadn't just barely alighted from the ferry when she was blindsided by Robbie Baikie's old one-eyed tom, which had been trying to inveigle itself across the roof tiles of the kirk after an imaginary pigeon. Or perhaps the pigeon wasn't imaginary, but by the time the cat blinked his eyes whatever he had seen was gone with the wind. At any rate, Junie Ooley, who was at this juncture a stranger to us all, came banking up the high street in a store-bought tartan skirt and a pair of black tights, with a rucksack flailing at the small of her back and both hands clamped firmly to her knit hat, and she never saw the cat coming, for all her visual acuity and the fine-ground photographic lenses she trucked with her everywhere. The cat—his name was Tiger and he must have carried a good ten or twelve pounds of pigeon-fed flesh on his bones—caught a gust and flew off the kirk tiles like a heat-seeking missile locked in on Junie Ooley's hunched and flapping form.

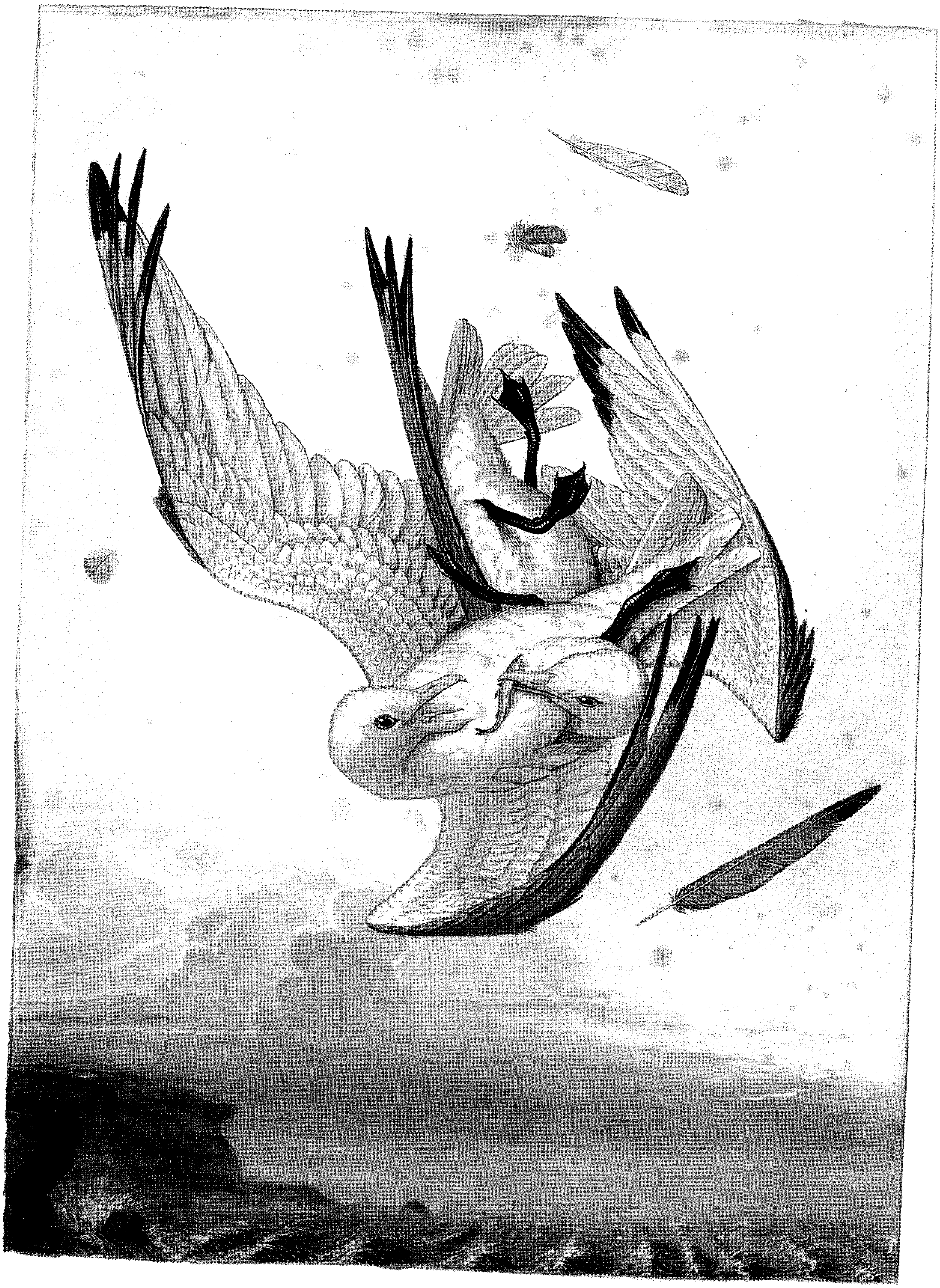
The impact was dramatic, as you would have had reason to testify had you been meditating over a pint of bitter at the rattling window of Magnuson's Pub as we were that day, and the bird woman, before she'd had a chance even to discover the whereabouts of her lodgings or offer up a "Good day" or "How do you do?" to a single soul, was laid out flat on the flagstones, her lips quivering unconsciously over the lyrics to a tune by the Artist Formerly Known as Prince. At least, that was what Robbie claimed afterward, and he's always been dead keen on the Artist, ever since he came by the CD of "Purple Rain" in the used-disk bin of a record shop in Aberdeen and got it for less than half of what it would have cost new. We had to take his word for it. He was the first one out the door and come to her aid.

There she was, flung down on the stones like a wilted flower amid the crumpled stalks of her limbs, the rucksack stuffed full of spare black tights and bird-watching paraphernalia, her kit and dental floss and all the rest, and Tiger just pulling himself up into a ball to blink his eyes and lick at his spanned paws in a distracted way, when Duncan Stout, ninety-two years on this planet and in possession of the first Morris automobile ever manufactured, came down the street in that very vehicle at twice his normal speed of five and a half miles per hour, and if he discerned Junie Ooley lying there was anybody's guess. Robbie Baikie flailed his arms to head off Duncan's car, but Duncan was the last man in these islands to be expecting anything unexpected out there in the middle of the high street designed and reserved exclusively for the traffic of automobiles and lorries and the occasional dithering bicycle. He kept coming. His jaw was set, his cap pulled down to the orbits of his milk-white eyes. Robbie Baikie was not known for thinking on his feet—like many of us, he was a deliberative type—and before he thought to scoop Junie Ooley up in his arms the car was on them. Or just about.

People were shouting from the open door of the pub. Magnus Magnuson himself was in the street now, windmilling his arms and flinging out his feet in alarm, the bar rag still clutched in one hand like a flag of surrender. The car came on. Robbie stood there. Hopeless was the way it looked. But then we hadn't taken the wind into account, and how could any of us have forgotten its caprices, even for a minute? At that crucial instant, a gust came up the canyon of the high street and bowled Robbie Baikie over atop the bird woman even as it lifted the front end of Duncan's car and flung it into the nearby street lamp.

The wind skreeled off down the street, carrying bits of paper, cans, bottles, old bones, rags, and other refuse along with it. The bird woman's eyes blinked open. Robbie Baikie, all fifteen stone of him, lay pressed atop her in a defensive posture, anticipating the impact of the car, and he hadn't even thought to prop himself on his elbows to take some of the crush off her. Junie Ooley smelled the beer on him and the dulcet smoke of his pipe tobacco and the sweetness of

WALTON FORD/COURTESY OF PAUL KASMIN GALLERY



the peat fire at Magnuson's and maybe even something of the sheep he kept, and she couldn't begin to imagine who this man was or what he was doing on top of her in the middle of the public street. "Get off me," she said in a voice so flat and calm Robbie wasn't sure he'd heard it at all, and because she was an American woman and didn't commonly make use of the term "clod," she added, "you big doof."

Robbie was shy with women—we all were, except for the women themselves, and they were shy with the men, at least for the first five years after the wedding—and he was still fumbling with the notion of what had happened to him and to her and to Duncan Stout's automobile and couldn't have said one word even if he'd wanted to.

"Get off," she repeated, and she'd begun to add physical emphasis to the imperative, writhing beneath him and bracing her upturned palms against the great unmoving slabs of his shoulders.

Robbie went to one knee, then pushed himself up even as the bird woman rolled out from under him. In the next moment, she was on her feet, angrily shifting the straps of her rucksack where they bit into the flesh, cursing him softly but emphatically and with a kind of fluid improvisatory genius that made his face light up in wonder. Twenty paces away, Duncan was trying to extricate himself from his car, but the wind wouldn't let him. Howith Clarke, the greengrocer, was out in the street now, surveying the damage with a sour face, and Magnus was right there in the middle of things, his voice gone hoarse with excitement. He was inquiring after Junie Ooley's condition—"Are you all right, lass?"—when a gust lifted all four of them off their feet and sent them tumbling like ninepins. That was enough for Robbie. He picked himself up, took hold of the bird woman's arm, and frog-marched her into the pub.

In they came, and the wind with them, packets of crisps and beer coasters sailing across the polished surface of the bar, and all of us instinctively grabbing for our hats. Robbie's head was bowed and his hair blown straight up off his crown as if it had been done up by some mad cosmetologist, and Junie Ooley heaving and thrashing against him till he released her to spin away from him and down the length of the bar. No one could see how pretty she was at first, her face all deformed with surprise and rage and the petulant crease stamped between her eyes. She didn't so much as look in our direction, but just threw herself back at Robbie and gave him a shove as if they were children at war on the playground.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?" she demanded, her voice piping high with her agitation. And then, glancing round at the rest of us: "Did you see what this, this big *idiot* did to me out there?"

No one said a word. The smoke of the peat fire hung round us like a thin curtain. Tim Maconochie's Airedale lifted his head from the floor and laid it back down again.

The bird woman clenched her teeth, set her shoulders. "Well, isn't anybody going to do anything?"

Magnus was the one to break the silence. He'd slipped back in behind the bar, unmindful of the chaff and bits of this and that that the wind had deposited in his hair. "The man saved your life, that's about all."

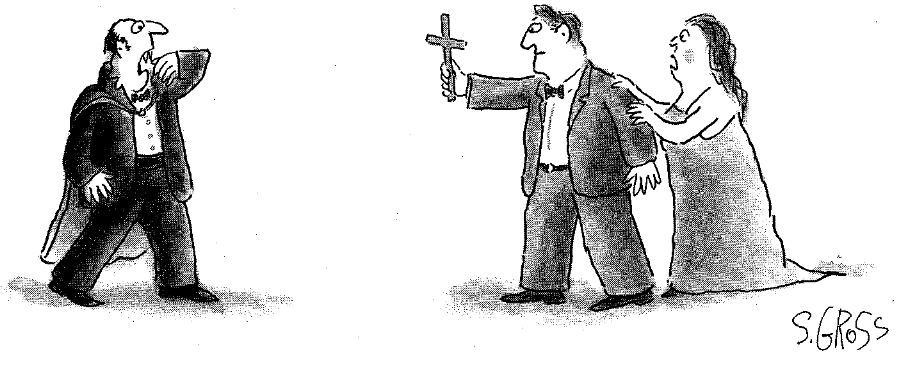
Robbie ducked his head out of modesty. His ears went crimson.

"Saved—?" A species of comprehension settled into her eyes. "I was . . . something hit me, something the wind blew . . ."

Tim Maconochie, though he wasn't any less tightfisted than the rest of us, cleared his throat and offered to buy the girl a drop of whiskey to clear her head, and her face opened up then like the sun coming through the clouds so that we all had a good look at the beauty of her, and it was a beauty that made us glad to be alive in that moment to witness it. Whiskeys went round. A blast of wind rattled the panes till we thought they would burst. Someone led Duncan in and sat him down in the corner with his pipe and a pint of ale. And then there was another round, and another, and all the while Junie Ooley was perched on a stool at the bar talking Robbie Baikie's big glowing ears right off him.

That was the beginning of a romance that stood the whole island on its head. Nobody had seen anything like it, at least since the two maundering teens from Cullivoe had drowned themselves in a suicide pact in the Ness of Houlland, and it was the more surprising because no one had ever suspected such depths of passion in a poor slug like Robbie Baikie. Robbie wasn't past thirty, but it was lassitude and the brick wall of introspection that made him sit at the bar till he carried the weight of a man twice his age, and none of us could remember seeing him in the company of a woman, not since his mother died, anyway. He was the sort to let his sheep feed on the blighted tops of the heather and the wrack that blew up out of the sea, and he kept his heart closed up like a lockbox. And now, all of a sudden, right before our eyes, he was a man transformed. That first night, he led Junie Ooley up the street to her lodgings like a gallant out of the picture films, the two of them holding hands and leaning into the wind while cats and flowerpots and small children flew past them, and it seemed that he was never away from her for five minutes consecutive after that.

He drove her all the wind-blasted way out to the bird sanctuary at Herma Ness and helped her set up her equipment in an abandoned crofter's cottage of such ancient provenance that not even Duncan Stout could say who the



*"Stop! He's my agent!"*

landlord might once have been. The cottage had a thatched roof, and though it was rotted through in half a dozen places and perfervid with the little lives of crawling things and rodents, she didn't seem particular. It was in the right place, on a broad barren moor that fell off into the sea among the cliffs where the birds made their nests, and that was all that mattered.

There was no fuss about Junie Ooley. She was her own woman, and no doubt about it. She'd come to see and study the flocks that gathered there in the spring—the kittiwakes, puffins, terns, and northern fulmars nesting the high ledges and spreading wide their wings to cruise out over the sea—and she had her array of cameras and telephoto lenses to take photographs for the pricey high-grade magazines. If she had to rough it, she was prepared. There were the cynical among us who thought she was just making use of Robbie Baikie for the convenience of his Toyota minivan and the all-purpose, wraparound warmth of him, and there was no end to the gossip of the biddies and the potboilers and the kind who wouldn't know a good thing if it fell down out of Heaven and conked them on the head, but there were also those who saw it for what it was: love, pure and simple.

If Robbie had never much bothered about the moorits and Cheviots his poor dead and buried father had bred up over the years, now he positively neglected them. If he lost six blackface ewes stranded by the tide or a Leicester tup caught on a bit of wire in his own yard, he never knew it. He was too busy elsewhere. The two of them—he and the bird woman—would be gone for a week at a time, scrabbling over the rock faces that dropped down to the sea, she with her cameras, he with the rucksack and lenses and the black bottles of stout and smoked-tongue sandwiches, and when we did see them in town they were either having tea at the hotel or holding hands in the back nook of the pub. They scandalized Mrs. Dunwoodie, who let the rooms over the butcher's shop to Junie Ooley on a monthly basis, because she'd seen Robbie coming down the stairs with the girl on more than one occasion and once in the night had heard what could only have been the chirps and muffled cries of coital transport drifting down from above. And a Haroldswick man—we won't name him here, for decency's sake—even claims that he saw the two of them cavorting in the altogether outside the cottage at Herma Ness.

One night when the wind was up, they lingered in Magnuson's past the dinner hour, murmuring to one another in a soft indistinguishable fusion of voices, and Robbie drinking steadily, pints and whiskeys both. We watched him rise for another round, then weave his way back to the table, a pint clutched in each of his big red hands. "You know what we say this time of year when the kittiwakes first return to us?" he asked her, his voice booming out suddenly and his face aflame with the drink and the very joy of her presence.

Conversations died. People looked up. He handed her the beer and she gave him a sweet, inquisitive smile and we all wished the smile were for us and maybe we begrudged him it just the smallest bit. He spread his arms and recited a little poem for her, a poem we all knew as well as we knew our own names, the heart stirrings of an anonymous bird-lover lost now to the architecture of time:

Peerie mootie! Peerie mootie!
O, du love, du joy, du Beauty!
Whaar is du came frae? Whaar is du been?
Wi di swittlin feet and di glitterin een?

It was startling to hear these sentiments from Robbie Baikie, a man's man who was hard even where he was soft, a man not given to maundering, and we all knew then just how far overboard he'd gone. Love was one thing—a rose blooming atop a prickly stem risen up out of the poor soil of these windswept islands, and it was a necessary thing, to be nourished surely—but this was something else altogether. This was a kind of fealty, a slavery, a doom—he'd given her *our* poem, and in public no less—and we all shuddered to look on it.

"Robbie," Magnus cried out in a desperation that spoke for us all, "Robbie, let me stand you a drop of whiskey, lad," but if Robbie heard him he gave no sign of it. He took the bird woman's hand, a little bunch of chapped and wind-blistered

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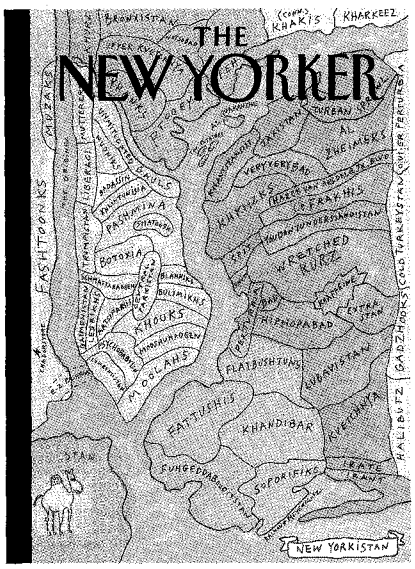

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knuckles, and brought it to his lips. "That's the way I feel about you," he said, and we all heard it.

It would be useless to deny that we were just waiting for the other shoe to drop. There was something inhuman in a passion as intense as that—it was a rabbity love, a tup's love, and it was bound to come crashing down to earth, just as the Artist lamented so memorably in "When Doves Cry." There were some of us who wondered if Robbie even listened to his own CDs anymore. Or heeded them.

And then, on a gloomy gray dour day with the wind sitting in the north and the temperatures threatening to take us all the way back to the doorstep of winter again, Robbie came thundering through the front door of the pub in a hurricane of flailing leaves, thistles, matchbooks, and fish-and-chips papers and went straight to the bar for a double whiskey. It was the first time since the ornithological woman had appeared among us that anyone had seen him alone, and if that wasn't sign enough there were those who could divine by the way he held himself and the particular roseate hue of his ears that the end had come. He drank steadily for an hour or two, deflecting any and all comments—even the most innocuous observations about the weather—with a grunt or even a snarl. We gave him his space and sat at the window to watch the world tumble by.

Late in the day, the light of the weltering sun slanted through the glass, picking out the shadow of the mullions, and for a moment it laid the glowing Cross of our Saviour in the precise spot where Robbie's shoulder blades conjoined. He heaved a sigh then—a roaring, single-malt, tobacco-inflected groan it was, actually—and finally those massive shoulders began to quake and heave. The barmaid (Rose Ellen MacGooch, Donal MacGooch's youngest) laid a hand on his forearm and asked him what the matter was, though we all knew. People made their voices heard so he wouldn't think we were holding our breath; Magnus made a show of lighting his pipe at the far end of the bar; Tim Maconochie's dog let out an audible fart. A calm settled over the pub, and Robbie Baikie exhaled and delivered up the news in a voice that was like a scouring pad.

He'd asked her to marry him. Up there, in the crofter's hut, the wind keening and the kittiwakes sailing through the air like great overblown flakes of snow. They'd been out all morning, scaling the cliffs with numb hands, fighting the wind, and now they were sharing a sandwich and a bottle of stout over a turf fire. Robbie had kissed her, a long, lingering lover's kiss, and then, overcome by the emotion of the moment, he'd popped the question. Junie Ooley had drawn herself up, the eyes shining in her heaven-sent face, and told him that she was flattered by the proposal, flattered and moved, deeply moved, but that she just wasn't ready to commit to something like that, like marriage, that is, what with him being a Shetland sheepman and she an American woman with a college degree, and a rover at that. Would he come with her to Patagonia to photograph the chimango and the nandu? Or to the Okefenokee Swamp in search of the elusive ivorybill? To Singapore? São Paulo? Even Edinburgh? He said he would. She called him a liar. And then they were shouting and she was out in the wind, her knit cap torn from her head in a blink and her hair beating mad at her green eyes, and he tried to pull her to him, to snatch her arm and hold her, but she was already at the brink of the cliff, already edging her way down amid the fecal reek and the raucous avian cries. "Junie!" he shouted. "Junie, take my hand, you'll lose your balance in this wind, you know you will! Take my hand!"

And what did she say then? "I don't need any man to cling to." That was it. All she said and all she wrote. And he stood in the blast, watching her work her way from one handhold to another out over the yawning sea as the birds careened around her and her hair strangled her face, and then he strode back to the minivan, fired up the engine, and drove back into town.

That night, the wind soughed and keened and rattled like a set of pipes through the canyon of the high street on till midnight or so, and then it came at us with a new sound, a sound people hadn't heard in these parts since '92. It was blowing a gale. Shingles fled before the gusts, shrubs gave up their grip on the earth, the sheep in the fields were snatched up and flung across the countryside like so many puffs of lint. Garages collapsed, bicycles raced down the street with no more than a ghost at the pedals. Robbie was unconscious in the sitting room of his cottage at the time, sad victim of drink and sorrow. He'd come home from the pub before the wind rose up in its fury, boiled himself a plate of liver muggies, then conked out in front of the telly before he could so much as lift a fork to them.

It was something striking the side of the house that brought him to his senses. He woke to darkness, the electric

## PILLOWCASE WITH PRAYING MANTIS

I found a praying mantis on my pillow.
"What are you praying for?" I asked. "Can you pray
for my father's soul, grasping after Mother?"
Swaying back and forth, mimicking the color
of my sheets, raising her head like a dragon's,
she seemed to view me with deep feeling, as if I were
St. Sebastian bound to a Corinthian column
instead of just Henri lying around reading.
I envied her crisp linearity, as she galloped
slow motion onto my chest, but then she started
mimicking me, lifting her arms in an attitude
of a scholar thinking or of a romantic suffering.
"Stop!" I sighed, and she did, flying in a wide arc,
like a tiny god-horse hunting for her throne room.

—*Henri Cole*

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ed, though the thorns dug
s and the wind took the
ead and flailed the beard
ks. He squinted against
irt and the darkness, and
wo hundred yards away
nd him to the left: the
ge, and with her in it.
ed, but the wind beat at
his voice and carried it
s no voice at all. "Junie!"
, the bird woman, the
with the legs that took the
ou and the face and figure
ear perfection as any man
dreamed of on the best
fe, she never knew that
me for her. What she did
the wind was bad. Very
have struggled against it
w futile it was to do any-
n succumb to it, huddle
wait it out. Where were
wondered. How would
is—on their wings? Out
s cold, shivering, the fire
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mney. And then the chim-
a sound of claws raking
e. There was a crack, and
s gave way, and then it
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g to the andirons, but the
away, and then she clung
the hearth, but the stones
y as if they were nothing
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ound her. Nobody did.
ne who'll say she was
ay to the coast of Nor-
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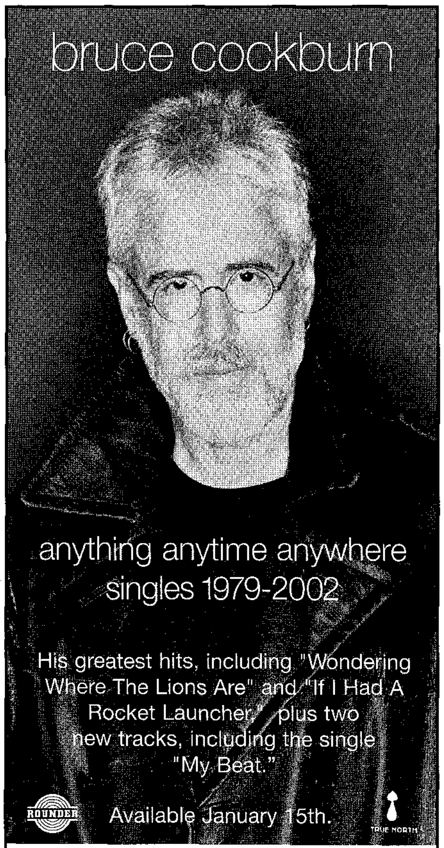
r that a ship's captain,
n in a storm sea, found
d the pocked safety glass
like a living figurehead,
ally believes it. Robbie
d the night and he sur-
ning of her, too. He sits
his pint and his drop of
back nook at Magnu-
nybody should ask him
love of his life, the bird
merica, he'll tell you he's
in the cries of the kitti-
rm the skies in spring,
ace there, too, hanging
crashing sea on the stiff
a bird. Poor Robbie. ♦



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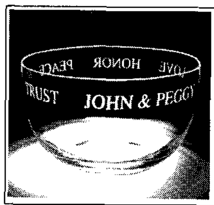

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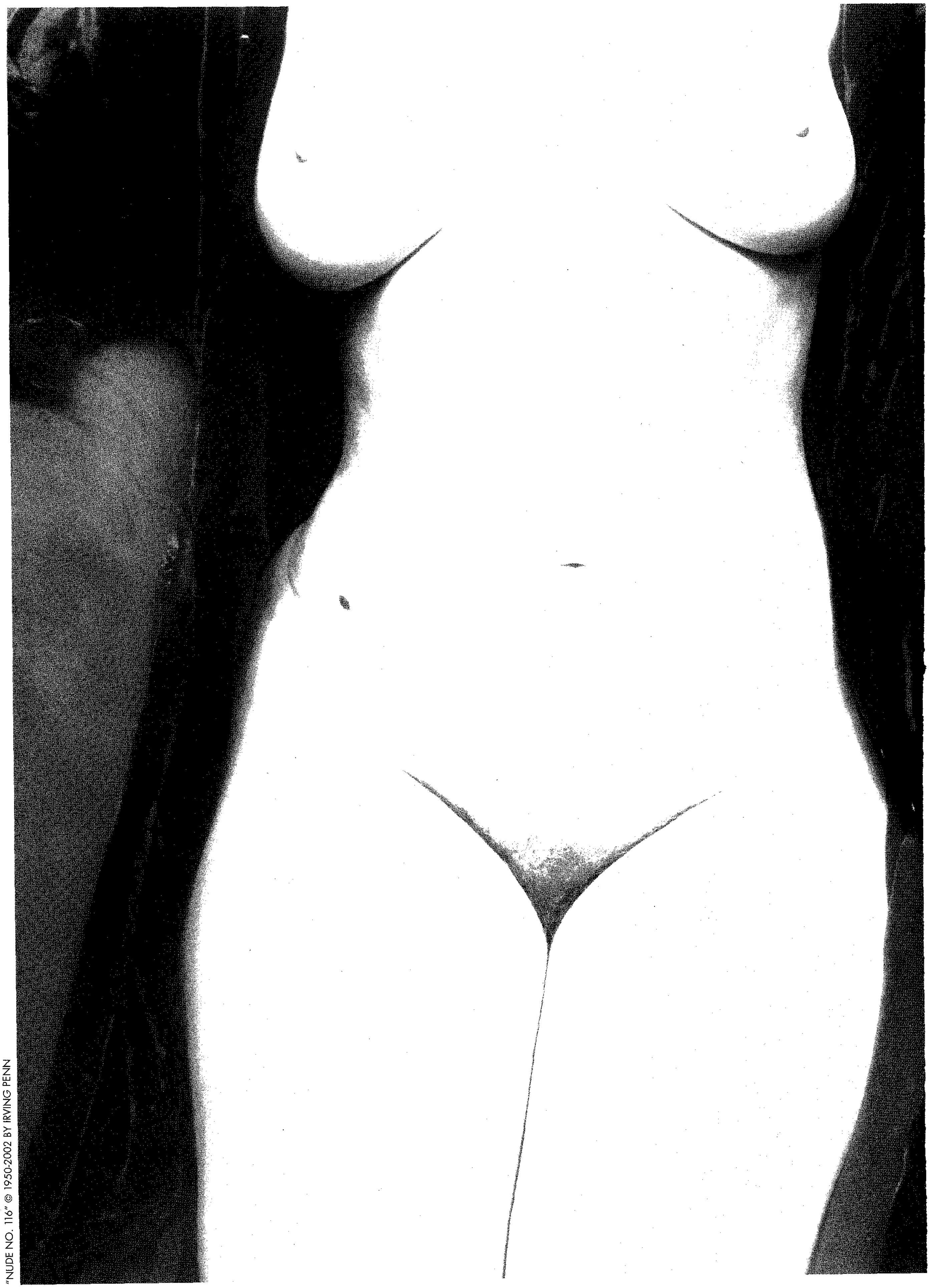

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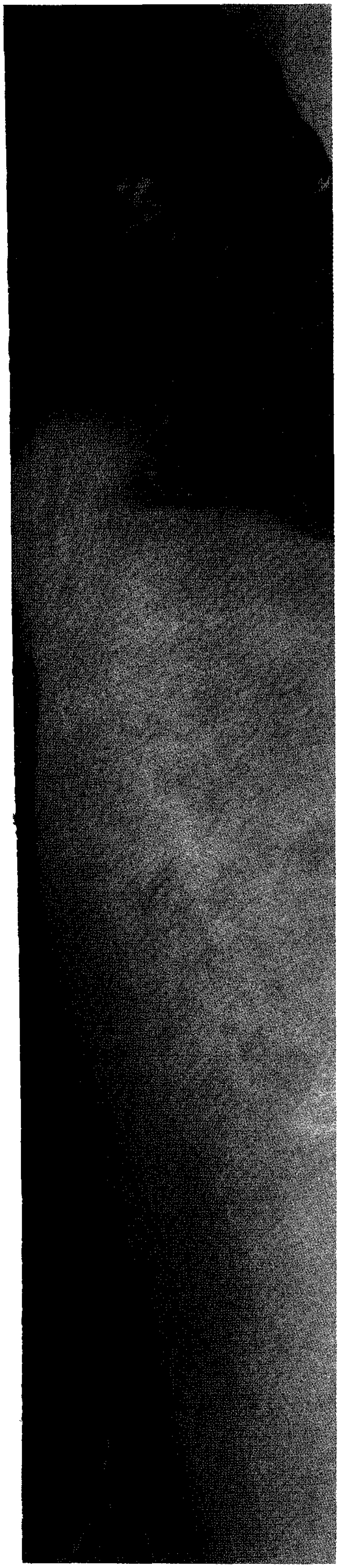

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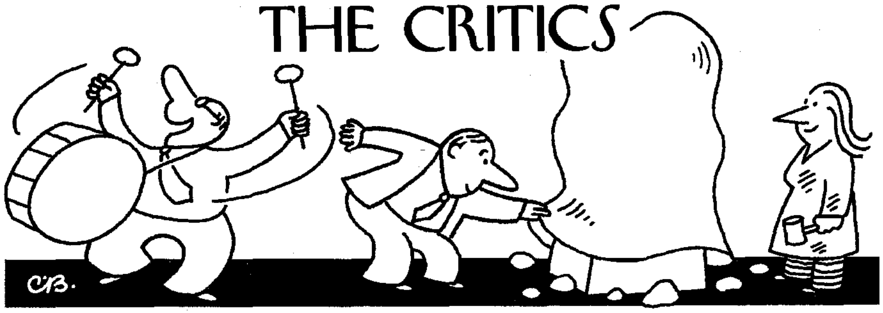

## ON PHOTOGRAPHY

# SOME BODIES

*Irving Penn's nudes.*

BY ANTHONY LANE

Readers of *Vogue* know what they want from a photograph. Leaf through the recent December issue, for instance, and you will come across Mario Testino in spanking form. Italian locations, winter-busting sunlight, and a trunkful of everyday essentials, including low-slung Gucci jeans and a Vera Wang evening dress in "ivory georgette," which sounds like a rising porno star. The lucky few who manage to clamber into the crisscross black swimsuit by Michael Kors are urgently advised to "Go bronze with Neutrogena's Sunless Tanning Foam in Deep." As for the model, what can you say? Loveliness, like namelessness, is part of the deal, and, while nobody would be so cruel as to call her thin, I like to think that, should the modelling jobs ever dwindle, she could carve out a second career as a spring onion.

There is, however, another option open to you. Stroll over to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and confront the work of another regular from *Vogue*. Consider "Nude No. 98," an image so ferociously up to the minute that it can only have been taken at least half a century ago. This model is equally nameless, but she is headless, too, and, as she lies on her side, she is cut short, along the left-hand frame, just at the meeting of her thighs. As for her clothes, she is at that unutterably fashionable stage of wearing none at all. And this is what we find: breasts the size of boxing gloves that slump away from the rib cage, plus a crease of flesh along the upper stomach, matched farther down by a kind of long smile where the navel must be concealed. If this lady ever got hold of the Neutrogena, she could Foam in Very Deep Indeed. Finally, the pubic area is tucked away in the discreet bay of shadow formed by the surrounding hills: a touching show of unwitting decorum. All in all, you might have trouble squeezing this woman into Vera Wang, and, although she gives off a sexual languor, the person most qualified to seduce her, Marcello Mastroianni, is no longer with us to try his luck. The photographer, it goes without saying, is Irving Penn.

The Met show is entitled "Earthly Bodies," and it brings together a selection of Penn's nude studies from the years 1949 and 1950. Anyone who knows anything of Penn's career will be moved to ask not "Why did he take these pictures?" or "How do they feed the flow of his aesthetic career?" but "Where on earth did he find the time?" By the summer of 1949, Penn, who was born in 1917, in New Jersey, was hitting his indefatigable stride. Having moved on from posts at Saks Fifth Avenue (where he was the advertising art director) and at *Harper's Bazaar*, he was now—under the aegis of Alexander Liberman—a formidable fixture at *Vogue*. Readers had already been treated to his covers, one of which had served as the first still-life to front the magazine; his great series of portraits had unveiled the royalty of the art world and other cultural domains—Miró, Balthus, Capote, Cocteau, Graham, Schiaparelli, and a couple of heavyweight sluggers called Nathan and Mencken. Yet here he was, sneaking away to make peculiar art from women who bore neither the stamp of perfection nor the burden of fame. There were at least eight sessions, with a number of different models; Penn toiled at his task during the evenings and weekends, in the way that more diffident souls practice their woodwork or their golf swing. You don't give up the day job when the day job is at *Vogue;* still, one quite understands how a ceaseless supply of physical flawlessness—one beauty after the next, strung out like pearls—might drive even the hardiest of fashion snappers to take a walk on the plump side. Looking at the show, I began to envisage Penn as a quiet American cousin of the Catherine Deneuve character in "Belle de Jour." She, blessed with a husband who looks like a male model and behaves like a perfect gent, seeks afternoon solace in the paws of the misshapen and the voluminous, as if to reassure herself, like Penn, that beauty is not always truth, and that truth comes in different sizes.

The camera that Penn used was a Rolleiflex, which means that the format is uniformly square. Most of us, like many professionals, use the rectangle of thirty-five millimetre: excellent for the prone human form, the row of family grins, or, when tilted ninety degrees, the full-length portrait. Squareness, on the other hand, imposes its own rules. If you are photographing a naked woman, something has to give: you must push the lonely figure back and strand her in space, edit out her neck or her knees, or else scrunch her into the format as if packing her into a box. The one thing that is ideally fitted to the square negative is the face—and that, needless to say, is the one thing for which the Penn of "Earthly Bodies" has no use. There are no faces on show here; if you had walked past these women on the street, you would never have recognized them, although so closely are you urged to inspect them that one can easily imagine a doctor, or a fellow-swimmer in the locker room, glancing at a Penn model and crying out helplessly, "Hey, I know you!" One woman has the neat dot of a mole on the lower east side of her belly, like a landmark on a map, and you find yourself seeking it out, as if to get your bearings.

The earliest pictures are uprights; that is to say, the subject is standing, sometimes against a wall. The first model is slim and small-breasted; one image of her, alone of all the nudes that Penn would take in the ensuing months, was actually printed in *Vogue*, to illustrate a July, 1950, piece on "Skim-Milk Diet X." I would give half my kingdom to have seen the faces of the dietary queens when the later shots came in: frame after frame of full-cream women, no longer erect but lying or sprawling on the floor, their bodies—and therefore their consciences—untroubled by diets from either end of the alphabet. In the event, Alexander Liberman, whose tastes were honorably catholic, smelled something blasphemous in the pictures, and no more were reproduced in the magazine. Even Edward Steichen, then heading the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art, was ruffled. He asked Penn to contribute a selection of work to a forthcoming symposium but added, conspiratorially, "None of those nudes." Thus rebuffed, or simply misunderstood, Penn chose not to exhibit more than a few of them for thirty years.

At first glance, these pictures bear scant relation to Penn's more acceptable obsessions. Most people know—even if they could not name the photographer—the fashion shots with which Penn sanctified the pages of *Vogue*, starting at the end of the nineteen-forties. They just happen to be the most beautiful pictures ever made of the most beautiful clothes ever sewn—clothes that the owner could don and shed by herself, that is, as opposed to the gowns of a Watteau *fête galante*, which could be applied only by a complex pulley system, and which required the wearer to hold her breath for the entire month of August. In an added twist, many of the images that Penn created in the fifties feature the most beautiful woman of the fifties—Lisa Fonssagrives, whom he took the hugely sensible precaution of marrying. (They had a son, born in 1952, and remained happily married for forty-two years, until Lisa's death, in 1992.) The very title of a Penn shot releases the sniffable air of a more tempting age, stoppered and sealed on film: "Woman in Dior Hat with Martini." It sounds as distant as Pompeii.

The radiance, though, is hardly straightforward. We want glamour and a fingertip precision from Penn, and, ever the professional, he delivers; and yet, staring at the outlines of Lisa and the others of her cheetah-like breed, you also catch a sobriety that, under the influence of a thousand framed posters, you might not expect. It has something to do with the steadiness, the reluctance to flirt or flatter, in the models' expressions: the half smile, the one-thousandth of a smile, the no smile at all. Then there are the backgrounds, with their clouded, plastery grays and freckles of dust; for every image that blinds you with Arctic whiteout, there are two that resemble stage flats, or a building under construction. At the fringe of the frame, you catch yourself on cables, and on other paraphernalia of the working studio. It is as if Penn were saying, Look at this—at this luscious fur and feather, the tensed bow of those lips—but don't imagine that the rest of life has anything to do with it. Style may have an aura, true, but, like perfume, it stretches maybe five yards around you; beyond that, things get real. Hence, perhaps, his fondness for veils: with their capacity both to show and to secrete, they are alluring, but it's hard to ignore their funereal rustle. Fashion magazines, these days, are so agog at youthfulness, and at the eternal appeal of the ephemeral, that readers could be forgiven for believing that the girls will never grow old; an Irving Penn fashion shoot, however, scratches away at an unthinkable taboo, and leaves us with the twilit—and, to commercial advertisers, dumbfounding—thought that even models are mortal.

And that is where the nudes come in. The women you will see at the Met know all about the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to, and, if you lean in close enough, you can trace the fault lines of the shocks for yourself. One model has faint stretch marks, and the fact that she has given birth removes her from the false timescale of fashion—where everything is outmoded and instantly replaced but never actually allowed to mature—and shifts

"NUDE NO. 81" © 1950-2002 BY IRVING PENN

her into the rhythms and wrinkles of real time. As a result, the success of the exhibit will be tested and proved not by critical response but by the reactions of ordinary female visitors. On the one hand, these awkward bodies, presented without compunction to the lens, may come as a relief to all those (especially the freaked parents of teen-agers) who despair at the corporeal standards that prevail in movies and magazines—the itty-bitty, the proto-bulimic, the anti-Newtonian bust. On the other hand, those who take against these nudes—and one hopes, as with any important show, for a stream of turbid complaints—will storm down the steps of the Met, cursing Irving Penn as the Henry VIII of the Rolleiflex. How *about* this guy? A woman catches his fancy, he takes her picture, and then he chops her head off.

It is a fair point. If feminist art criticism unearths in the baseness of the male gaze, however sophisticated, a wish to treat the female body as no more than an object, then a Penn nude may be a public offense. All that acreage of bosom and hip, with no defiant eye or withering smile to put the photographer in his place, no face to confirm the crowning presence of a person: how can one defend such blatant elision of identity? You might as well tie a tag to one of these women's toes and flourish her in court as Exhibit A in the case against the artist. And yet, although the figures are laid out on a floor, that floor is not a slab, and, if there is one thing you would swear on oath, it is that they are alive. You don't just sense this; you see it. Penn had his models twist and swivel, locking and unlocking their poses, and, in one marvellous instance, the woman's knee is blurred, not because it

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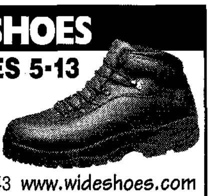
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has dropped out of focal range but simply because it is on the move. She is big, but she is too damn quick for the man with the camera, and, if he can't keep pace with her motions, well, that's his problem. He just clicks, but she rocks and rolls.

So why not concede the feminist case and take the argument from there? Let us admit that, yes, in some of these photographs the bodies are no more than objects; but they are also no *less* than objects, and what Penn does, with an honesty that few of his peers can muster, is to remind us that a body, rounded and grounded, is one of the more enthralling objects on earth—indeed, the more earthbound, the better. To perceive and inspect it as a thing, a moving mass, is not to look down on it, still less to leer at its blandishments, but to be struck afresh by its gravity and bulk. There is a notorious and baffling phrase of Donne's, in "The Second Anniversary," when he is commemorating "the Religious death of Mistress Elizabeth Drury," who was, he says, "richly and largely hous'd":

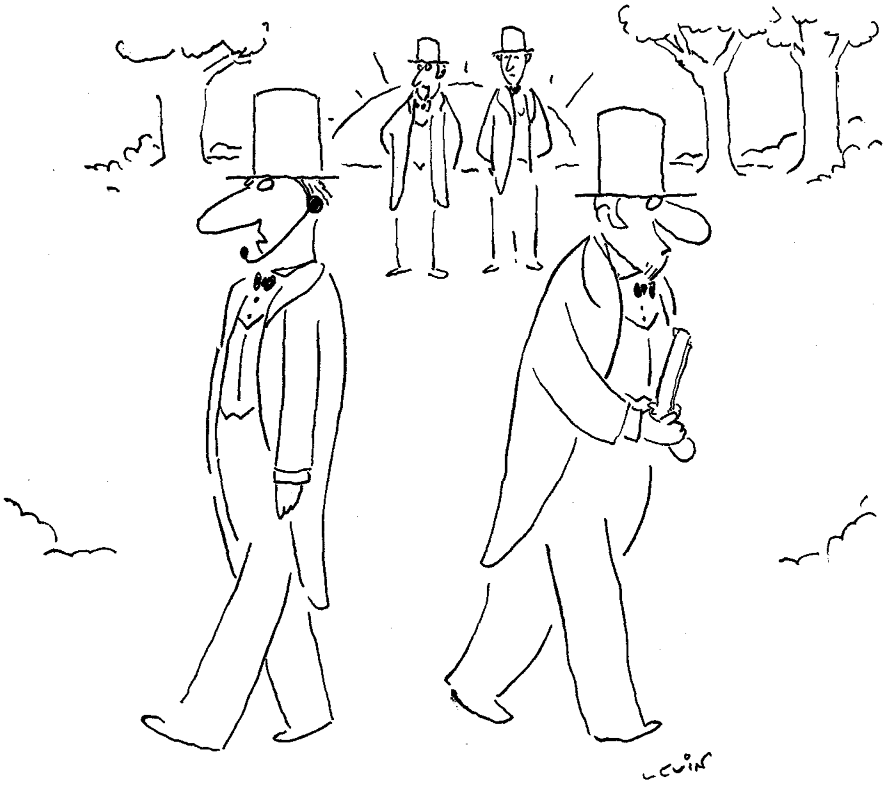
> Her pure, and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly
>     wrought,
> That one might almost say, her body
>     thought.

We are at the limits of logical sense here, and yet the mystery is one that we instinctively pray to be true, of the living as much as the dead: "Her body thought." Rather than shrinking this paradox, photography has served to magnify it, and from its most primitive days the medium has thrown up images that stir us with an intensity that outweighs their value as social documents; we can be rattled into brief intimacy with persons of whose acquaintance we will never have the pleasure. The camera is overrated as a psychological weapon; I am never wholly convinced by the theory that a "personality"—that vaguest and least easily classified of interior beasts—can be caught and tamed in a sixtieth of a second. The emulsion on a strip of film is such a thin skin that the most we can ask of it, perhaps, are textures and hints—gestures toward what such-and-such a person, at this time, might be like to know.

When we look at Penn's portrait of S. J. Perelman, say, taken in 1962, what do we get? The rim of the hat, like a dark halo; the heavy stitching of the suit, the button-down shirt, and the eyes wet and rheumy behind the wire of the spectacles; the mustache that could so easily double as some new generation of industrial scouring brush. All this would allow me to point Perelman out across a room, but, beyond that, all I could add for sure is that, with the high rise of his eyebrows, the guy who wrote so much for Groucho Marx is himself in danger of turning into Groucho. Put the two of them in nightcaps and they could rerun the mirror sequence from "Duck Soup." But what of the sadness in Perelman's face? Is that the melancholy that is rumored to dog every comic, or is he pulling a fast one on Irving Penn? The point is that, under interrogation, Perelman is keeping back more than he is betraying, however definitive we want Penn's portrait to be; whereas the nudes, who are denied even the right to smile, somehow wind up seeming twice as expressive as any formal head shot. Although the psychological profile of "Nude No. 42" must remain a closed book, the cocked jut of her pelvis has suddenly become an open secret, and it seems no less revealing, no less an index of her uniqueness, than the rise and fall of her voice. We have no clue about these women's hair color or their political leanings, but we notice how they act and react, and how they come to rest—moments that would normally be the province, or the privilege, of a lover lying beside them. And what could be more knowing than that?

Penn is hardly the first to visit this tricky terrain. The best approach to his show would be to detour into the Met's Dutch galleries and get a dose of Rubens and Rembrandt into your system. From Bruegel to de Kooning, it is the artists of the Low Countries who have carved the most rewarding paths onto and under the skin of their fellow-citizens. Rembrandt lavished as much care on the pillowy upper thighs of Hendrickje Stoffels, his maid and mistress, as he did, in the late self-portraits, on the wintry mottling of his own cheeks. It is Rubens, of course, who has traditionally administered the most Penn-like shock; there are passages of paint in "Fall of the Damned" in which the artist seems indifferent to anything but the arrangement of bodies, in all their swagger and swarm. (That is what will make people blush at the Penn show: not their own embarrassment before nudity, which most of us have mastered by now, but the near-ecstatic lack of embarrassment on the part of the photographer himself.) Svetlana Alpers, in "The Making of Rubens," points out the curious sexual slippage in a Rubens nude; the cowlike, lurching hero of "Drunken Silenus" is male, but he has certifiable breasts, just as the stocky trunks and pitted limbs of Rubens's naked women could easily belong to Bacchic gentlemen of leisure, caught in mid-debauch. It makes you realize how profitably Penn himself could photograph the male nude; after all, flesh is flesh (a little more hairiness would pose a fresh challenge), and anyone who could summon, as Penn did in his portraits of the sculptors Jacob Epstein and David Smith, such a portly and proddable magnificence—swollen enough to be funny, and yet not funny at all—could certainly find and photograph a modern Silenus. One might almost say, men's bodies think, although most women would sharply disagree.

What kind of man would revel in the folds and escarpments of the body, in the human capacity to become half-landscape? Rubens's dashing brush was wielded by a decorous, even puritan, stalwart of the upper bourgeoisie; he was as moderate in his tastes as his paintings are florid and full-blown, and, three centuries on, it is noticeable that all accounts of Irving Penn, likewise, stress his patient craftsmanship. Few photographers have left a more reliable record of their times, and yet few have taken such pains to wipe from their work any trace of photojournalism. Penn is widely travelled, as witnessed by his studies of local people—haughty children, gentle-humored elders—in lands as far apart as Peru (in 1948) and New Guinea (in 1970). Yet there is no glimpse of either place; in the first instance he rented a studio, in the second he took his own, in collapsible form, as if to convince us that these individuals required no social context—as if, in the minutiae of dress and demeanor, they were like countries in themselves. You can see why they trusted the man with the camera; in his perennial jeans and sneakers, and with the soft tenor of his voice, Penn is apparently, at the age of eighty-four, the model of courtesy, and,



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according to Maria Morris Hambourg, who curated the show at the Met, his New York studio is so efficiently ordered that it is known to some as "the hospital."

His greatest still-lifes, taken in the nineteen-seventies, are dirty pictures: nothing carnal, merely a sequence of half-smoked butts, flattened cigarette packs, and run-over coffee cups—trash, hooked as fresh as trout from the flow of New York streets and scrutinized in unforgiving closeup. It is as if Penn were preëmpting the work of future archeologists, collating the flotsam of a lost imperial city, whose inhabitants marked their most precious artifacts with the image of a Camel. This brand of lyric pedantry is essential Penn, and you see it most frostily purveyed in his color closeups of the late seventies, when he somehow succeeded in lighting and shooting frozen foods—small bergs of beans and raspberries—without having them melt all over his feet. That may be why his nudes press themselves upon us with such force: not that they are sterile, let alone surgical, but precisely because they represent a cool and careful soul—someone whose most effective technique as a portraitist is to hem his subjects into a specially constructed corner—reaching out, for once, beyond the natural confines of his temperament. His recollection of the sessions, more than fifty years ago, is marked by an undiminished warmth. As he told Hambourg, "I kept talking all the time, being very supportive, not so much verbally but with coos, murmurs, and supportive breathing to convey that everything was wonderful, just right." The smell, he remembers, was "sweet, powdery, a little sweaty. Very good."

Look at the prints themselves and you realize that the will to break established habits did not end when the models got dressed and went home. A Penn print is often impossibly refined; his densest portraits, whether of Paris pastry cooks or of Asaro mud men in New Guinea, tend to take advantage of the platinum-palladium process, which builds up a classical wealth of deep and sculpted tones. Some of the nudes duly ended up as platinum prints, but most in the exhibit are gelatin-silver prints—more granular, more open to manipulation, and thus to unevenness and risk. Many have a bleached appearance, and the contours of the body crumble softly, like dunes; it appears that Penn deliberately tried to lose the image through overexposure in the darkroom, then wrenched it back to life with a cocktail of chemicals. The results look stunned or spooked, and the models turn into heavy ghosts, their distinguishing features burned away by the acidic baths; one woman is a block of clean white, the undercurves of her breasts and waistline etching out a kind of unexpected face, as simple as a child's sketch. Best of all, perhaps, is the short series of velvet shots; the model is supine in a gray armchair, her legs and torso lapped at the side by waves of lustrous black fabric. She is pure form, shorn of detail, while the velvet is nothing *but* detail, right down to the wink of a safety pin at the top left. The effect is bewildering—a tense portrayal of a relaxed being, a world of erotic suggestion conjured electrically from the rubbing together of surfaces. Anyone who thinks that photography, like painting, must suffer a grim division between figurative and abstract should pay a visit to these pictures and think again.

Are we ready for "Earthly Bodies"? Was Penn wise to bring his nudes out of storage? Years of debate over the depiction of gender may have softened us up, but, more important, gallerygoers are likely to have kept pace with artists like Lucian Freud and his young British follower Jenny Saville; her proud and livid nudes, many of them bereft of heads, make you wonder whether she studied reproductions of the Penns. As for Freud, he possesses, for all the slowness of his creative practice, a dash of Penn's impatience—the curiosity that compels both artists to try new angles of attack, and to happen upon harmonies of mass and line where the rest of society would not dream of seeking them. It was Freud who painted Jerry Hall not in her heyday as a supermodel but when she was pregnant: a very Penn-like delay, waiting for the body to slacken, stretch, and fill with extra life. That Irving Penn, the leading light of *Vogue*, chose to exchange all those wasp-waisted paragons for human bumblebees may have annoyed his mentors, but it both secured and perplexed his role in the story of photography. Only now, long after the experiment is over, do we have the opportunity to look at the product of those sweaty afternoons, listen to the music of its forms, and know, beyond all question, that the fat lady sings. ♦

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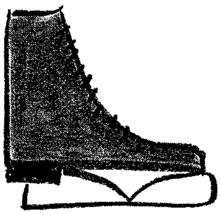
# BRIEFLY NOTED

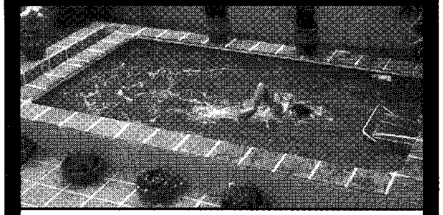
Roscoe, *by William Kennedy (Viking; $24.95).* Roscoe Owen Conway, fifty-five, fat, and in failing health, is the brains who protects and preserves Albany's Democratic Party, and, as Kennedy's seventh "Albany Cycle" novel opens, Roscoe has plenty of protecting and preserving to do. It's V-J Day, 1945, and though the war in the Pacific is over, the war at home has just begun: the Democratic machine is facing a stiff challenge from the state's Republican governor, who is determined to link Albany's mayor to gambling, prostitution, and a host of other behaviors that the electorate might well frown upon. When Elisha Fitzgibbon, the city's major Democratic funder and one of Roscoe's oldest friends, commits suicide, it looks as if the city's entire political tapestry might unravel. But Roscoe empties out his bag of tricks, enlisting informants, greasing palms, and setting up secret meetings, all the while courting Veronica, Elisha's widow and his longtime love. Thick with crime, passion, and backroom banter, "Roscoe" neatly reverses the insularity of Kennedy's previous novel ("The Flaming Corsage"); the book, and its hero, is an extrovert's dream.

At the Hands of Persons Unknown, *by Philip Dray (Random House; $35).* In this history of lynching in the post-Reconstruction South—the most comprehensive of its kind—the author has written what amounts to a Black Book of American race relations. Dray has scoured the archives and emerged with a plethora of horror stories, but he has also made excellent use of recent work on the psychology and sociology of lynchings and has incorporated everything into a tight, cleanly written narrative. He demonstrates that lynching was not a hysterical spasm of violence committed by a few angry troublemakers but a social institution—a ritualized spectacle that was central to white Southerners' understanding of themselves and their quest to uphold a way of life they saw as threatened. But if lynching was instrumental in the preservation of racial oppression it also proved a catalyst for resistance: the anti-lynching crusades of Ida B. Wells and the N.A.A.C.P. gave birth to the modern civil-rights movement.



Gwen John: A Painter's Life, *by Sue Roe (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $30).* The impression that a portrait by Gwen John makes—that here is a picture of a model as the model herself would have painted it—is supported by the facts of her life. Born in 1876 in Wales, the older sister of Augustus, Gwen John first studied at the Slade and then decamped to Paris, where, in 1904, she fell in love with Rodin while working as his model. She devoted herself to him, despite his growing indifference, until his death, in 1917, but she never stopped painting. This absorbing biography manages both to record the minutiae of the artist's life—her garrets, paint wheels, and feral cats—and to explain how her curious, ecstatic nature influenced her work.

Sacagawea's Nickname, *by Larry McMurtry (New York Review Books; $19.95).* In twelve essays, the novelist contrasts the West of the American imagination—"an eternal pastoral, very beautiful but usually unpeopled, except for the Marlboro Man"—with the West of the historical record. He tells us about cowboys and Indians, but he also describes the anthropologists, the Wild West shows, the pulp novelists, and the tourists (Grand Duke Alexis of Russia, visiting the prairie in 1872 with Buffalo Bill Cody, "shot two or three horses before they could get him pointed toward the buffalo"). Yet McMurtry doesn't debunk the mythic West; he honors it. This is a profound and frequently funny book.



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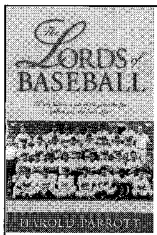

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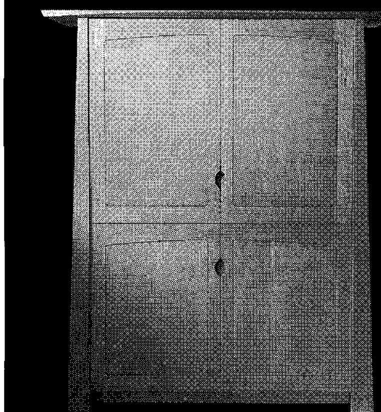
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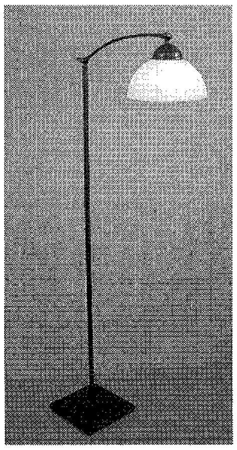
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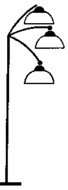

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## THE THEATRE

# BRING ME SUNSHINE

*Morecambe and Wisecracking.*

### BY JOHN LAHR

The big hit of this theatrical season in London is the quick-witted comedy team The Right Size—the lanky Sean Foley and the stocky Hamish McColl, who scored Off Broadway a couple of years ago in a bit of slapstick merriment called "Do You Come Here Often?" Now, at the Wyndham's Theatre, they are back at their stock-in-trade with some cunning hokum entitled "The Play What I Wrote," a sort of anti-homage to the late, great English double act Eric Morecambe and Ernie Wise, who teamed up in the early forties and who, from 1954 to 1984, primarily through a variety of television shows, corrupted the English public with a pleasure that made them among the most beloved comedians of the postwar era. The show—which includes nonsense songs, surreal dance numbers, a visit from a mystery guest, and the staging of a terrible play ostensibly penned by McColl ("A Tight Squeeze for the Scarlet Pimple")—takes its energy and much of its shape from the arsenal of Morecambe and Wise's genial flimflammery, and it brings the antic spirit of English music hall into the twenty-first century.

"There are funny lines, but no funny men," Eric Morecambe told Kenneth Tynan in 1973. But Morecambe, who died in 1984, *was* a funny man. He was tall, bespectacled, rambunctious, and swift. Rubber-legged, he had the extra advantage of looking goofy in almost any costume, especially a posh one. He had the clown's rogue gene. Wise, who died in 1999, did not. He was short, conventionally good-looking, and somewhat vacant. Where Morecambe was incorrigible, Wise was sedate. Light needs shadow to intensify its brilliance, and so it is with comics, which is why Dame Edna employs the deadpan Madge, and the blowhard Oliver Hardy was partnered by the Milquetoast Stan Laurel. Wise's pretensions to artistic and intellectual authority impelled Morecambe to take liberties; his gravity showed off Morecambe's grace. In other words, Wise was the prose that allowed Morecambe's poetry. Everything that Morecambe touched with his exaggerated gestures—his thick black glasses, his hat, the curtain (especially the curtain)—became an occasion for zany upstaging and for an exhilarating mockery of decorum. Together, like all great comedy teams—Martin and Lewis, Burns and Allen, Abbott and Costello—Morecambe and Wise cut a risible silhouette: they were a collection of physical and psychological opposites, which combined to present the world with a single comic psyche.

The brashest and most interesting conceit in "The Play What I Wrote" is that neither of the contemporary clowns wants to be Wise; both vie to be the madcap, scene-stealing Morecambe. The opening of Act II simulates the finale of the long-running TV series "The Morecambe and Wise Show," with Foley and McColl in top hats and tails dancing backward down neon-lit stairs to the signature tune "Bring Me Sunshine." When they turn to face us at the end of the number, both Foley and McColl are wearing Morecambe's black glasses. It's a great sight gag. "The Play What I Wrote" also raises the knotty issue of which member of The Right Size is funnier, who is the ticket and who the passenger—an inevitable undercurrent both of a double act's curious symbiosis and of its neurosis. In this battle of nitwits, McColl, who apparently hasn't raised a laugh since 1997 (the legendary titter was caught on tape and is played for us),

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is the loser. He decides to throw in the towel and break up the team, which provides The Right Size with its own opportunity to send up theatrical artifice.

McCOLL: Sean, I'm retiring from show business.
FOLEY: You're only saying that to cheer me up.
McCOLL: It's true.
FOLEY: Where are you going?
McCOLL: I don't know yet.
FOLEY: Say your next line and find out.
McCOLL: Eastbourne.
FOLEY: There you go.

But before he leaves, The Right Size—with the help of Toby Jones, a pug-nosed jack-in-the-box who bobs up variously as the show's producer, David Pugh, Daryl Hannah, and the people of France—manages some rollicking moments. As McColl gnashes his teeth about his inability to get more than "inaudible laughs"—"I am not funny, and I have no hope of ever being funny"—Foley keeps popping up behind him with cue cards to undermine the shaggy sob story: "PROFESSIONAL SUICIDE," "PATRONISE HIM," "BLOND GIRL . . . STALLS . . . ROW C . . . PIZZA HUT . . . FIVE MINUTES." Every laugh is Foley's, but McColl magnanimously thanks the audience. "I am even grateful to Sean for giving me this moment alone with you, and not using it as an opportunity to make another cheap gag," he says. It's wonderful vaudeville folderol.

*Hamish McColl and Sean Foley take on the late, great English comedy team.*

HARRY BORDEN

Such exercises in liberty are hard to pull off, but the level of oxygen that this evening generates is greatly increased by the deft direction of Kenneth Branagh, who has borrowed from such far-flung sources as James Thurber's lurking behemoth animals and Buster Keaton's collapsing house in "Steamboat Bill, Jr." And Eddie Braben, who wrote much of Morecambe and Wise's trademark daft cross talk, has been imported to add authentic dopiness to Foley and McColl's punning badinage. "The time is 1759," McColl says, as he introduces his awful play. Foley interrupts: "Call it six o'clock."

For Morecambe and Wise, whose only higher education took place onstage, comedy was business (they referred to playing the provinces as "bank raids"). They had nothing else. "For Ernie and I to play one minute without a laugh is murder. *It is fear*," Morecambe told Tynan. The urgency of their commitment was what sometimes elevated their act to the purity of metaphor and made them poetic. McColl and Foley, on the other hand, are university wits—men with options. They aspire to art, and at times they strain for the resonance of metaphor, which is why their shrewd act, even when it succeeds, seems a little earthbound. This self-consciousness is apparent from the first beat. Taking a page from Morecambe and Wise's book, "The Play What I Wrote" begins and ends with the pair together in bed—a neat correlative for their comic interdependence. At the opening, as Foley strums a ukulele, they sing a nonsense song that concludes, "I'm dreaming of a hope / Hoping for a light / To finish a ridiculous song / About a song / About a dream." The song, which is uncharacteristically oblique, is an attempt to deconstruct Morecambe and Wise's high jinks—their dreamscape of caprice, in which gestures become a semaphore of joy, and ignorance, insult, humiliation, and ambition have no consequences but delight. At the finale, as the men get comfortable under the covers, they ponder McColl's play and the performance of the mystery guest (the week I saw the show, it was George Cole, the hatchet-faced star of "Minder," playing the Comte de Toblerone). The show ends with McColl planning yet another wretched play; the moment works as both sentiment and its antidote, a testament to two hapless souls bound together and killing time.

FOLEY: You know what you are? Brave beyond words.
McCOLL: That's a good title, that is. I'm going to start on that in the morning. It's going to be about a Red Indian who can't speak.
*(A police siren. They turn to each other.)*
McCOLL AND FOLEY: He won't sell much ice cream going at that speed.

"God they were funny," McColl and Foley add. Yes, they were. And so are The Right Size. But, no matter how hard they try to sidestep the issue, they are still lumbered with the impossibility of impersonating an incomparable act—they are neither quite themselves nor quite the act they honor. The audience is entertained but not, finally, inspired. At the curtain call, McColl and Foley surrender to the imperatives of nostalgia: they sing the song that was the simple and profound contract Morecambe and Wise made with the public and with each other at the end of every show—"Bring me fun / Bring me sunshine / Bring me love." Morecambe and Wise spent a lifetime defining their uniqueness; this remains the biggest challenge facing McColl and Foley. "The Play What I Wrote" is their greatest success so far, but not, I'd like to think, their greatest accomplishment. ♦

THE BACK PAGE BY BARRY BLITT

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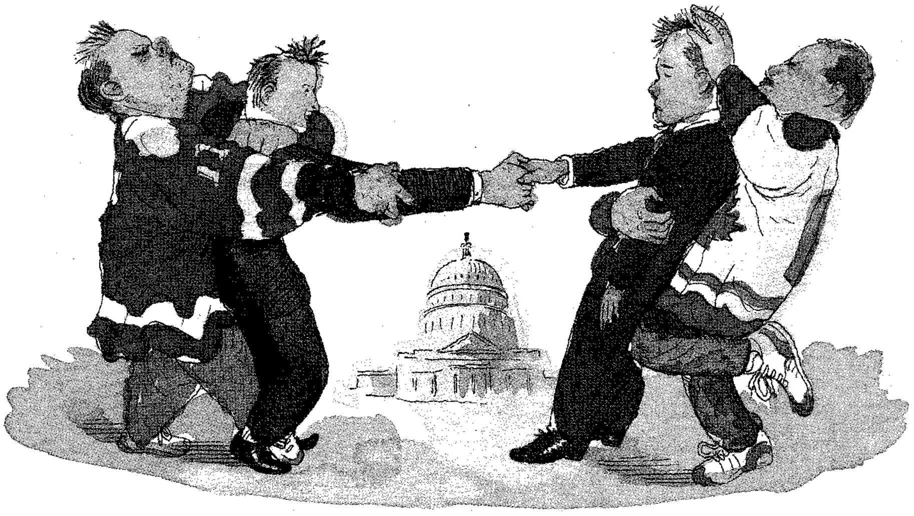

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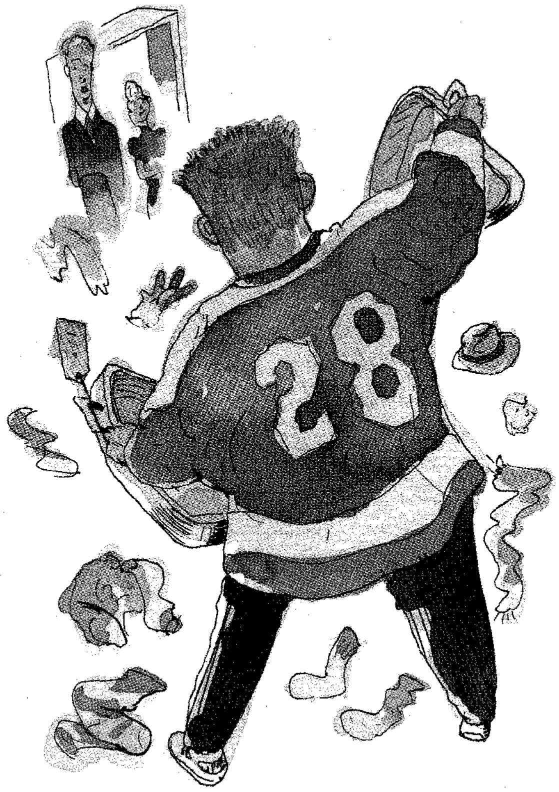

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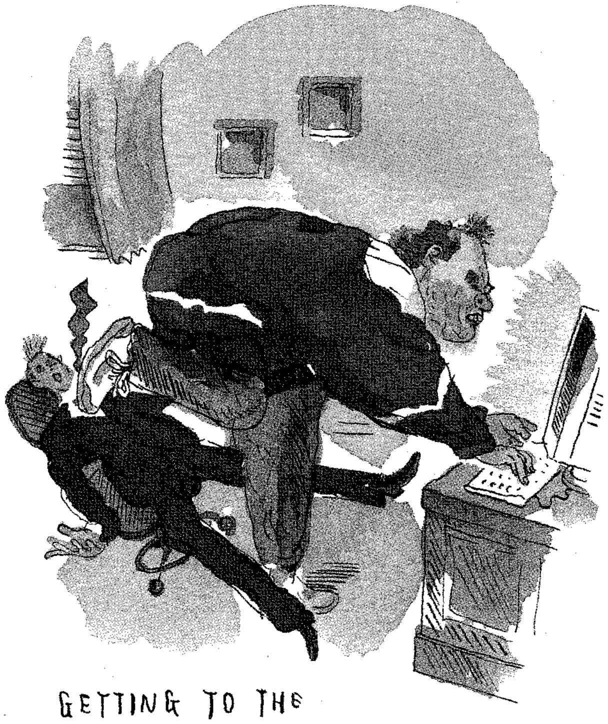

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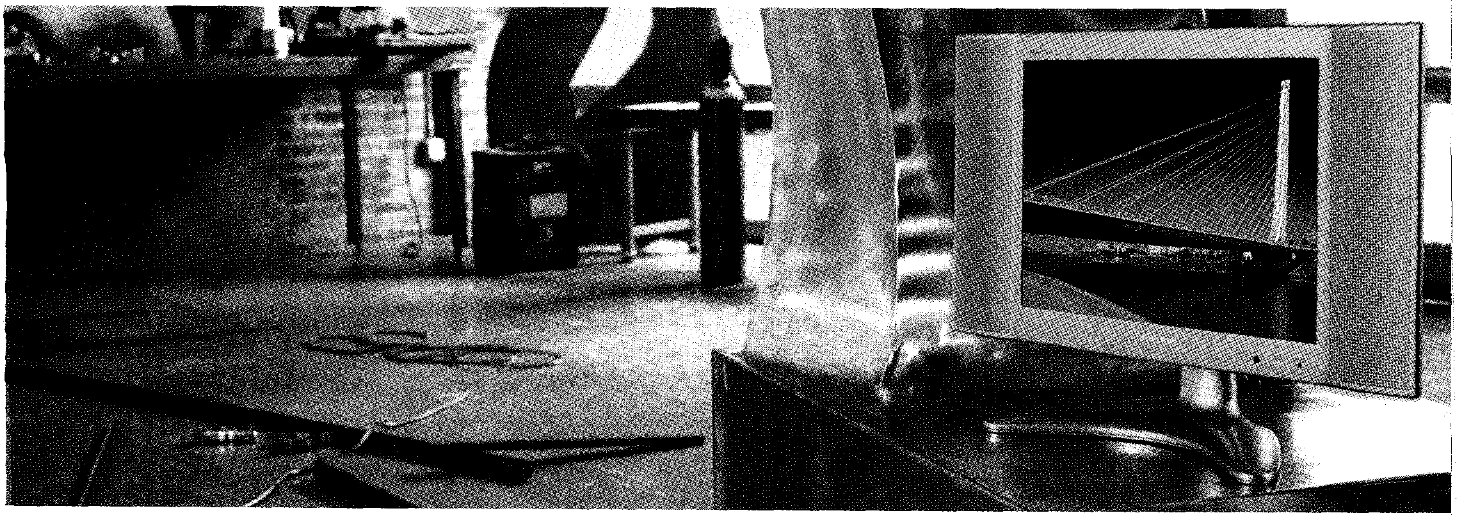

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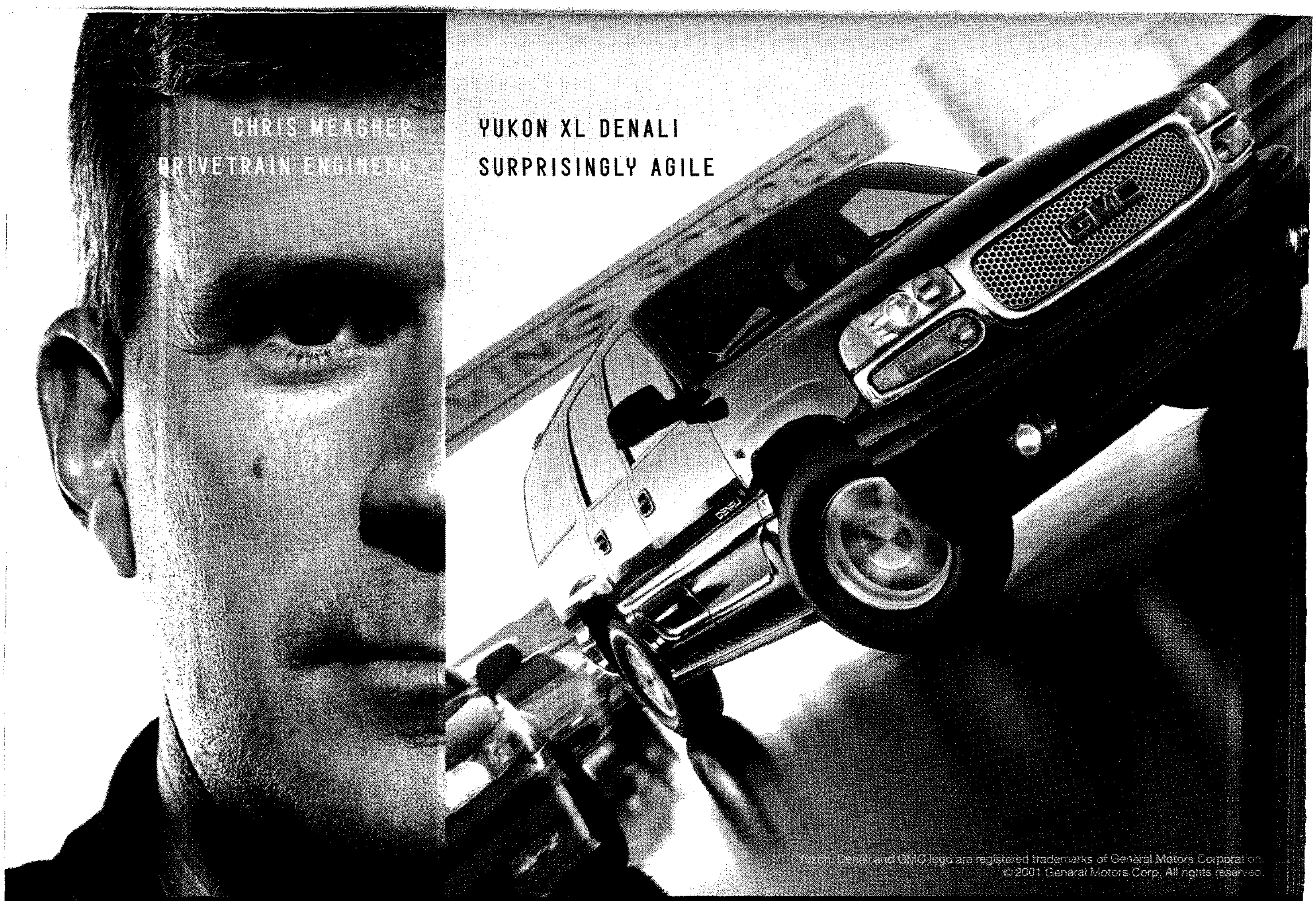

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